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TARRY-THOU-TILL-I-COME

GEORGE CROLY

THVLSTRVP

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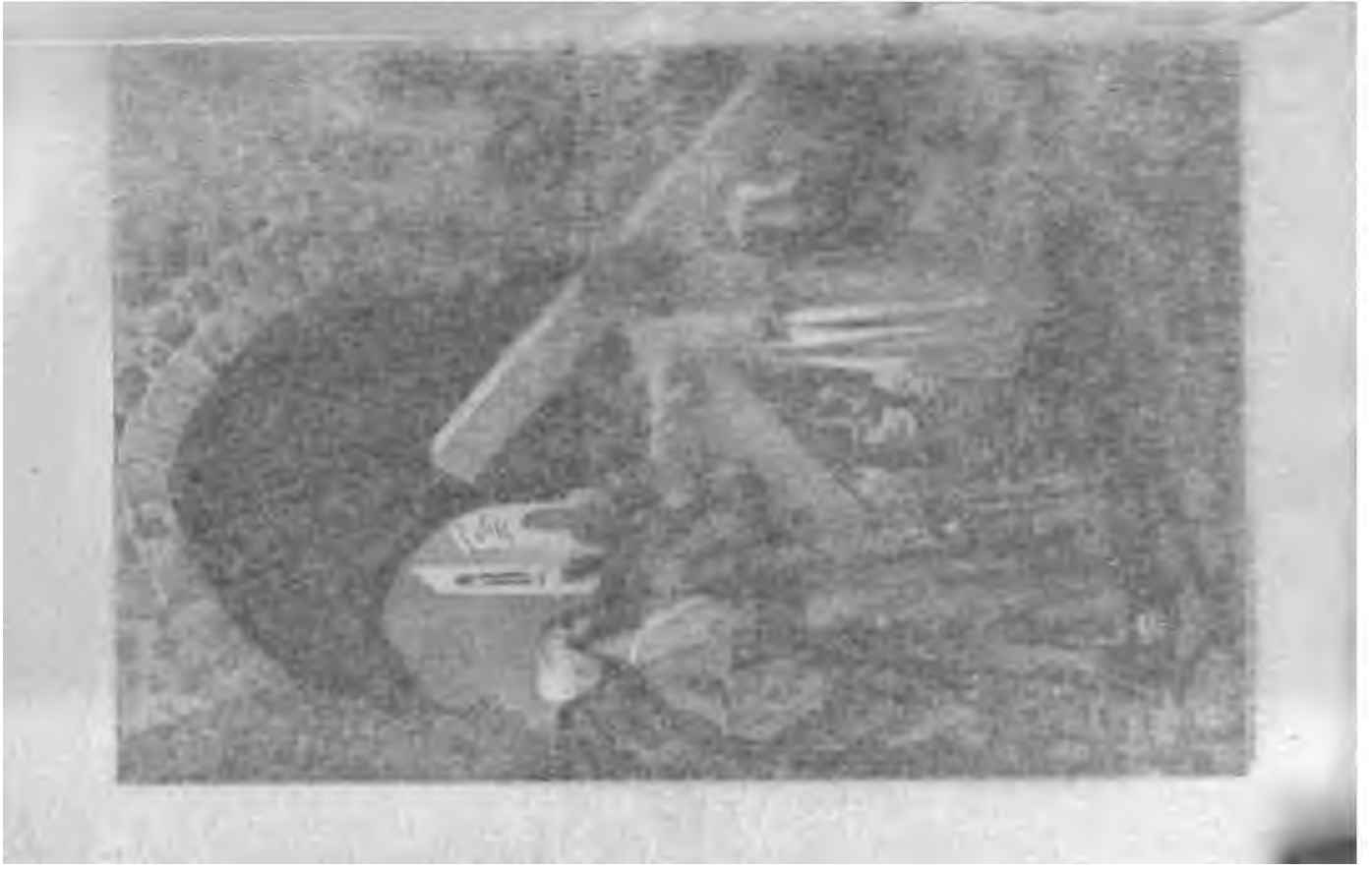

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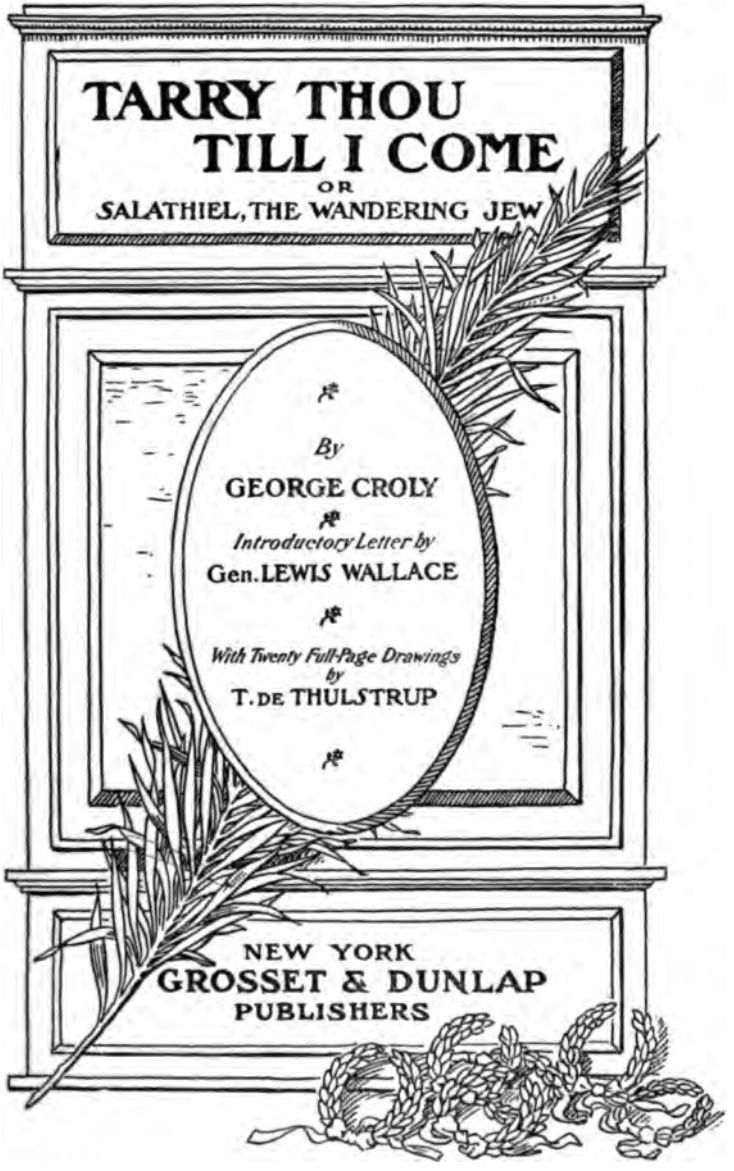

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

THIS remarkable historical romance is closely associated by the author in his brief Preface with the early Second Coming of Christ, a belief that is held to-day by a rapidly increasing number of people in all parts of Christendom.

The story was first published in 1827, and was issued at different times under different titles, as "Salathiel, a Story of the Past, the Present, and the Future"; and "Salathiel, the Immortal, or the Wandering Jew." It had wide popularity for a generation or more, the leading critical journals in England and America giving it great praise.

In the present revival of the story, many typographical and some other errors, that crept into the various editions, have been carefully corrected, chapter and marginal headings have been added, and the dialogs have been generally broken up into paragraphs in harmony with the fashion of to-day, and the whole book has been carefully annotated.

We are glad in the belief that we have carried out successfully General Lewis Wallace's wish, that the story be worthily illustrated. We were fortunate in securing a masterful artist who shared the great enthusiasm of the author of "Ben Hur" for this story of Croly's, and in his drawings Mr. de Thulstrup has spared neither time nor labor, spending many months, both here and in Europe, in the study of the details necessary to perfect the pictures. We feel assured that General Wallace will now wish to recast the closing sentence of his Introductory Letter.

The words that doomed Salathiel to immortality on earth, "Tarry Thou Till I Come," so fit the story that we have ventured to make them the chief title, and have so combined the new with the old that no one will be misled. The colored

frontispiece by Mr. de Thulstrup happily illustrates the new title.

In the Appendix will be found a series of letters written for this publication by thirty or more representative Jewish scholars on "*Jesus of Nazareth from the Present Jewish Point of View.*" The Appendix contains other matter suggested by the legend of "The Wandering Jew," prepared by D. S. Gregory, LL.D., and by Arthur T. Pierson, D.D. The general INTRODUCTION is self-explanatory.

It is believed that no book now before the public can be made nearly so helpful as this one in interesting the minds of readers, young and old, in the events that closely followed in Palestine the Crucifixion, and marked the conflict between early Judaism and Christianity, and ended in the final destruction of Jerusalem.

The reader will now and then be reminded of some of the more striking passages in two or three of the popular religious novels published in the past decade. But, as it is not given even to great geniuses to remember *forward*, our author will scarcely be exposed to the accusation of having borrowed from these later writers.

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FUNK AND WAGNALLS COMPANY.

NEW YORK and LONDON.

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

From General Lewis Wallace

(Author of "Ben Hur")

CRAWFORDSVILLE, IND., *September 1, 1900.*

GENTLEMEN: I have learned that you have in mind the issuance of a new edition of Croly's story of "The Wandering Jew." Perhaps you will lend a willing ear to a suggestion or two, so much is the book in my love.

In my judgment, the six greatest English novels are "Ivanhoe," "The Last of the Barons," "The Tale of Two Cities," "Jane Eyre," "Hypatia," and this romance of Croly's. If Shakespeare had never been born; if Milton, Byron, and Tennyson were singers to be, and Bacon, Darwin, and Ruskin unknown; if there had been no British dramatists, no British historians, no works in British libraries significant of British science and philosophy, no alcoves glutted with bookish remains of British moralists and preachers, still the six works named would of themselves suffice to constitute a British literature.

This is bold, I know: bold in assertion, and even bolder in the lift of Croly's story from the ground to a place in the upper sky. Can I justify the classification? Certainly, if only your patience and my time permitted.

Here, to begin, is a broad adverse generality,—the very worst of possible arguments against the book is, that of the five great classics with which I have thrust it into association, it is the least known to-day by the general public. Yet the admission is not in the least decisive of merits; in inquisitorial phrase it serves merely to put objections to question.

It is a religious novel, says one, sneering. That used to be urged against the "Pilgrim's Progress"; yet the Pilgrim

goes marching on, and I fancy his progress will stop only when the world stops. And how is it that of late years, at least, several novels religious in tone and spirit have been more than well received? Indeed, is it not a fact that some of them have attained extraordinary popularity, thus gainsaying the narrow Puritanism which less than a century ago put the novel under ban, regardless of kind and excellence?

Another objection. The style is somewhat too exalted; and then the critic makes haste to stretch the alleged defect to the author's want of art. Now, I would not like to be dogmatic or unkind, but such points certainly disclose a lamentable comprehension. Why, coiled up in that objection lie the very excellencies of the book. How, pray, could exaltation be avoided? Who does not know that in description the sublime always imposes its own laws? Imagine, if you can, the commonplace used by a narrator struggling to convey an idea of the tremendous in a hurricane at sea.

And as to a want of art, I would like to say mildly that the absence of art in the book is its main charm. Any, the slightest show of premeditation or design would have been gross treason to nature. Does a woman, struck to the heart, utter her grief by measure as a singer sings or a poet writes? And how is it with a man in rage or pain? Yet, verily, there was never a woman or a man in speech so impelled by a sting of soul as Salathiel.

Passing, now, the matter of criticism and mere negative dealing, I choose to be affirmative. Salathiel, the subject of the book, was a Jew, and in rank a Prince of the Tribe of Naphtali. In the persecution of Christ, his arrest, his trial, his scourging, Salathiel was the leading insatiate; and such, doubtless, he would have continued down to the last minute of the third hour of the Crucifixion but that the victim stopped him. At what stage of the awful crime the stoppage took place, the author leaves to inference; but how the incident befell and its almost inconceivable effect upon Salathiel, no man should again try to describe. This is from Croly, his words:

"But in the moment of exultation I was stricken. He

who had refused an hour of life to the victim was, in terrible retribution, condemned to know the misery of life interminable. I heard through all the voices of Jerusalem—I should have heard through all the thunders of heaven—the calm, low voice, 'Tarry thou till I come!'"

Such the retribution; now the effect.

"I felt my fate at once! I sprang away through the shouting hosts as if the avenging angel waved his sword above my head. Wild songs, furious execrations, the uproar of myriads stirred to the heights of passion, filled the air; still, through all, I heard the pursuing sentence, 'Tarry thou till I come,' and felt it to be the sentence of incurable agony! I was never to know the shelter of the grave!"

And then follow five paragraphs, each beginning with the same words uttered, as I imagine, in the tone of a shriek of anguish, "Immortality on earth!" And of those paragraphs, regarded as a dissection of the moral part of a man by virtue of which he is susceptible of infinite happiness or infinite misery, I say that for completeness and eloquence they are without parallel in the language. Nor is that all. In those paragraphs, one reading will find the definition of a punishment which in subtlety, in torture, and in duration is as far out of range of human origin as in execution it is out of range of human power. Yet more. Instantly with the comprehension of the punishment defined, the immeasurable difference between the agonies of death on a cross, though of days in duration, and the agonies of immortal life under curse on earth, becomes discernible. In that difference there is a divine thought in anger, an avenging impulse. The superiority in misery of the punishment of Salathiel, its term of sentence, its depth of suffering, its superhuman passion of vengeance, seem impossible to the all-patient Christ; and while we are considering its possibility, the book carries us to the question, Is there a wandering Jew?

I think so. Let smile now who will; yet, as I see, a whole race is the multiple of the man, just as the man is the incarnation of the race. Israel, the plural, merges in Salathiel,

This One

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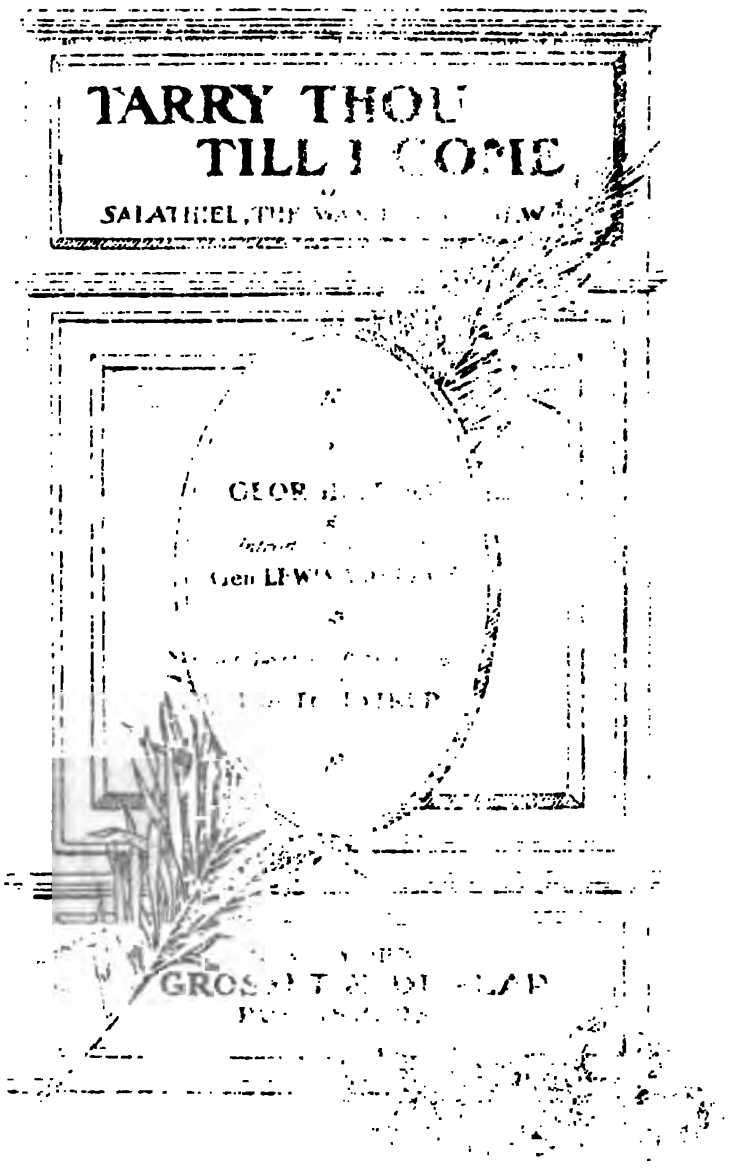
TARRY THOU TILL I COME

SALATHIEL, THE WAN[illegible]ER JEW



break, without a leap ("Nature never makes leaps," says Leibnitz; the leaps are only seeming), lifting the race by a new birth through Christ the type-life up to the plane of spiritual being and knowing.

Is the visible second coming of Jesus fancy or truth? Our author believed it true, and increasing multitudes to-day believe it true. Among these are many of the foremost Christian teachers of this generation, as that trio of great preachers recently dead, Charles H. Spurgeon, A. J. Gordon, and Dwight L. Moody; Newman Hall, Theodore Monod, Arthur T. Pierson, F. B. Meyer, J. H. Brookes, C. Cuthbert Hall. There is evidently near at hand an extraordinary revival of this belief.

In the republication of this remarkable story about the Jew who is "to wander on earth until Christ comes again," it has seemed to me that it would not be inappropriate to give, by way of Introduction, and in the Appendix, several lines of thought bearing upon the coming of Christ.

The Essential Coming of Christ

I

This coming is in harmony with the laws of sequence and continuity.

In each preceding step in the evolution of man the unfolding of the *physical basis* of life was from below, but the *life* itself was from above, never from below. Scientists are now practically unanimous in saying that, "There is not a scintilla of evidence that the inorganic or mineral world has ever evolved a plant life." "To the scientist," says Darwin, "it is a hopeless inquiry as to how life originated." "Life from an egg," is still the latest dictum of science; that is, life only from life.* Each of the successive steps or kingdoms has had

* "There is not a shadow of trustworthy direct evidence that abiogenesis [spontaneous generation] does take place or has taken place within the period during which the existence of life on the globe is recorded."—Huxley, under "Biology." Encyclopedia

its type-life. The plant—that is, the physical basis of the plant life—came from the inorganic matter; the animal—that is, the physical basis of the animal life—came from the plant and through the plant from the mineral kingdom; the natural man—that is, the physical basis of the life of the natural man—came from the animal and the kingdoms below it; the spiritual man—that is, the physical basis of the life of the spiritual man—comes from the natural man and the kingdoms below him.

The development from kingdom to kingdom was a natural unfolding; yet the new creature of the next higher order always came through a new birth—a double birth: (1) the birth of the new type-life of the next higher kingdom into the evolutionary order of nature, through the hereditary chain; and (2) the birth of each individual into this type-life.

None of the previous transitions from a lower to a higher kingdom has taken place within historic times. The cradle at Bethlehem flashes a searchlight down the spiral stairway up which man has come from platform to platform, kingdom to kingdom. Here at last we see that the type-life of the kingdom of the spiritual man is born from above into the hereditary chain of evolution. Many times, and in many ways, He declares I am "from above." He is born a natural man, and yet possesses the life of the kingdom next higher, and proceeds to lift the natural man by a new birth into the kingdom of the spiritual man. He is born the son of man and the son of God, bridging the chasm with His own being.

Again and again He says, "I am the *life*"; "I have come that ye may have *life*"; except ye partake of Me "ye have no *life* in you." He calls Himself the "bread of *life*," "the water of *life*." This would all be meaningless were Christ talking about the life of the kingdom of the natural man which all now have and have had.

Britannica, vol. iii., page 669. "These are the generations of every plant of the field *before* it was in the earth."—Gen. ii. 4, 5.

"That it [human consciousness] can not possibly be the product of any cunning arrangement of material particles is demonstrated beyond peradventure by what we now know of the correlation of physical forces."—Fiske, "The Destiny of Man," page 42. "By no possibility can thought and feeling be in any sense the products of matter." —*Idem.*, page 109.

not be permissible for us to guess, from the law of conformity to type, that in every kingdom the new creature carries with it the pattern of its type-life, and that after this pattern, in the lower kingdoms, the accompanying cells strive to weave a nature corresponding with its kingdom, and in the kingdom of the spiritual man the Holy Spirit strives to weave the nature of the spiritual man? *

In the lower kingdoms it is a survival of the *fightest*, in the highest a survival of the fittest, the struggle for life for ourselves merging into a *struggle for life for others*. Even among men in the earlier days, to discover the greatest man, the measuring-string was placed around the muscle. That was the age of Hercules. Then the time came when the measuring-string was placed around the head. That was the age of Bacon and Shakespeare. But the time comes in the rapidly advancing future when the measuring-string will be placed around the heart, and he who measures most there will be most conformed to the Master, for he is greatest who most fully gives himself for others.

Evolution goes on, hereafter, in the inner and upper world, outside and beyond our vision, making many and many variations doubtless, as in the lower realms. In the Father's spiritual house also are many mansions. We are stepping from the physiological to the psychological, from body and mind to spirit. As in all previous growth, the latest type-life is reappearing in His generation—in the "new creatures" of His kingdom.

II

The outward evolution—that of the physical—marvelous beyond thought, is comparatively insignificant. The chief evolution has been and is within. The scientist is unscientific who ignores the greater evolution and builds his explanatory system

* After watching the process hour by hour (in the semi-fluid globule of protoplasm of the embryo), one is almost involuntarily possessed by the notion that some more subtle aid to vision than an achromatic would show the hidden artist, with his plan before him, striving with skilful manipulation to perfect his work.—Huxley, "Lay Sermons," page 261.

on the lesser—on the least. Psychology is also a science. Has nature one method for the development of the physical part of man's being, and another for the development of the non-material and spiritual? Nature is not divided. What means the hereditary likeness, mental and spiritual—not less marked than the physical? These marks often skip many generations and then reappear again in full. They can not, therefore, be the result of education or imitation. Nor is it easy to believe that they were placed within us by a direct act of creation, as the old-fashioned theological professor taught that God mixed the fossils with the plastic stones at creation, somewhat as a cook mixes raisins and other fruits in the dough for her plum-pudding.

What means the gradual development in the brain of the cerebrum and cerebellum, the organs of the soul powers, enlarging from generation to generation? These are scarcely visible in the lowest animals. They become larger as we advance up the animal scale of intelligence, or psychic power; large in the ape, who came far along the same line that man came; four times as large in the lowest Zulu as in the ape, but far larger in the European and American civilized man—thus slowly made perfect through awful struggles and sufferings, painfully growing a million years or more. Is it not then reasonable to believe that there is a corresponding psychic or soul development from generation to generation in the unseen individuality, the ego, which uses the cerebrum and cerebellum as organs; that up the spiral stairway of evolution the whole man has come,—his personality, with its soul powers, and the physical organs of these powers in the brain, and the entire physical man?

To-day, in the unfolding embryo of every child, nature marvelously and clearly retells the history of the evolution of the physical nature of the human race from the one-celled moneron to the billion-celled man. For the embryo of the child is a historic map, done in flesh and blood, of the evolution of man, of the forms he has assumed, broadly speaking, as he climbed nature's stairway.*

*Romanes, in "Darwin and After Darwin," chapter iv., says that the embryo is a résumé or recapitulation of the successive phases through which the being has been de-

Is it hard to believe that our individuality has been born and reborn through the line of ancestry back to the type-lives, and through them back to the "beginning," when God took of His own life to develop, through ages of conflict, personalities other than His own who would, of their own free will, choose goodness? Is it hard to believe that at every successive birth each parent has placed his stamp upon the individuality, but that the individuality has perdured being reborn again and again into successive higher kingdoms? Does it seem hard to believe that we should be born many times? Is it then harder to believe that we should be born *after* we have lived than that we should be born when we have not lived? The profoundest mystery is in the first birth, in which we all believe. And why should it be thought by us incredible that, with the mingling of the parental cells, the individuality exactly fitted should be reborn in the line of heredity, receiving the parental stamp, being attracted by the law which answers to that law which guides the atom unerringly to its place in the crystal —that same law wonderfully exalted? Whatever and wherever character is, it must be obedient to the law that draws it, for the law of attraction is even more irresistible in the inner world than is the law of gravitation in the outer world. Every man as he comes to his birth comes to his own place; in a profound sense he *chooses* his parents and his surroundings. As he was, he is, plus his birth-gain and his growth through consent and volition; his past leads him.

And in this last transition each man is conscious that his individuality continues, altho he passes from one kingdom into the next. The dictum of science is "no leap, no break" —continuity. Then it is reasonable to believe that the individuality will continue through succeeding future changes, as it has continued these millions of years through the successive past changes. It would require much credulity to believe that nature has travailed in pain these untold ages to develop a personality that would of its own free will choose goodness, only to destroy that personality as soon as made. John Fiske

veloped, with explainable omissions. On page 102 he tells of the young salamander that is so complete in its gills shortly before birth that if it is removed from the womb and placed in water it will be able to live, breathing like a fish through its gills.

has well said:* "The materialistic assumption that the life of the soul ends with the life of the body, is perhaps the most colossal instance of assumption that is known in the history of philosophy."

That was a provincial notion about the universe which was held before Copernicus's time—the belief that the sun, planets, stars, all revolved around the earth. Copernicus was called the destroyer of faith and bitterly denounced. His idea made the earth but a speck, and the Milky Way—billions of miles long—the mere yard-stick of the universe. All this has immensely enlarged faith—did not destroy it. Darwin, too, was called the destroyer of faith; but now we begin to see that evolution, in giving man countless eons of growth, instead of keeping him a creature of yesterday, bounded by the cradle and grave, has immensely enlarged faith, and beyond thought has added to the dignity of man.

III

At each succeeding birth the individuality, to thrive, must be in harmony with its changed surroundings, and the cells that swarm in every organized body struggle to bring this to pass. It is the business of the cell to obey the pushings of the governing force in the organization to which it belongs. The plant needs water, minerals, air, sunshine. Its attendant cells hear the cry of their master and build roots into the ground and branches into the air, and weave leaves into lungs and laboratories. Note a vine in some cave—how it works its way toward the hole through which sunshine is streaming, and how it causes some roots to build out toward a vein of water; others toward a skeleton many feet away and along the bones of that skeleton—hungering and thirsting for minerals, water, light, heat. Hungering and thirsting—asking, knocking—the plant receives. Seek and ye shall find; strive and it shall be yours. This is the law in the plant life, the law in the animal life, in the life of the natural man, in the life of the spiritual man.

* "The Destiny of Man," page 110.

In a deep sense, as a man thinketh so he is. The universe of cells within each man calls him "master." Ye are gods; kings upon thrones; your slightest wish is heard; your earnest, persistent desire compels obedience. Answer to prayer is a growth, a building up or down to what you wish. Wishing is asking. Ask what you will, and from that instant receiving, you receive.

Christ can never *fully* come into a man until the man has grown up to the level of spiritual things. It is a sensuous generation that seeks to be satisfied with consolation through the physical senses.

All of our faculties carry their own demonstrations of truth up to the level of their development. To the pure and loving, purity and love need no witnesses. Every man has had placed in his hand a latch-key to the beauty and wisdom—to all of the excellences of the universe; but there is only one way of using that latch-key effectively. We must grow to a level with the latch. I must have an eye fitted for the landscape, and must have a poetic soul before the landscape can read its poetry to me. I may believe that Beethoven's Ninth Symphony is music because a master of music has told me so; that is belief based on authority; or, I may measure the waves of sound and scientifically demonstrate that it is music; but such evidences are beggarly, and praise based on them would drive a composer mad. But let me hunger and thirst after music; seek, pray for musical sight and soul until I develop up to the level of Beethoven's Symphony; then as quickly as I hear it I exclaim: "That is music!" Do you ask: "Who told you?" I answer: "No one; I *know* it!" My latch-key enters, for I am on a level with the latch. I asked, I sought, I knocked, until I grew up into the musical world. I must grow up to God before I can know Him; I must grow up to Christ before I can see Him. The pure in heart shall see and hear spiritual things. I must be on God's level before even the lowly flower can tell me the thought that was in His mind when He created it.

Seek is the law of growth in all kingdoms; and it is the law of development and of the adjustment of the feeders

through which each kingdom asserts itself to its creatures and gives them their food and consolation. Who has not smiled many times at the serio-humorous reflection of Robert Louis Stevenson on hearing of the death of Matthew Arnold: "So, Arnold is dead! I am sorry; he won't like God." There is a profoundly solemn truth under this witticism.

There is health for the plant in sun-rays; the plant had the need of light, and its cells heard the cry and groped toward the light. That capacity for light and that groping of the cells proved the existence of the sun. The conscious feeling after God among people everywhere proves the existence of God and of the spiritual world.

The new-born child must adjust its lungs to the atmosphere into which it comes or it must die. It hereafter must eat and drink with its mouth, breathe with its lungs; it must have new feeders. The bird, as it chips its way out of the egg, adjusts itself to its new surroundings. It is a hard trial often for a child to be weaned, yet it is love that does it. It is done to give it more abundant life, not less.

This is the meaning of self-denial, fasting, repentance, suffering—the weaning of the feeders from the old to the new environment—the feeders that give food and consolation. We enter into the kingdom of the spiritual man as the babe enters into the kingdom of the natural man. Every new creature grows up from the grave of the old. Up the stairs of holy patience we climb the heights of the inner kingdom. Our will henceforth is to yield our will, but the sensuous man contests every inch with the spiritual. The perishing of the old man day by day is painful, and so is the renewal of the inner, for birth also is painful. We learn to love love, hate hate, and fear only fear; but every move upward has in it birth-pangs. We are in the soul's gymnasium—on its battle-field. The creature was made subject to vanity for a cause.* Says Ruskin: "I do not wonder often at what men suffer, but I wonder at what they lose."

* "It is an inevitable deduction from the hypothesis of evolution that races of sentient creatures could have come into existence under no other conditions [than those of pains and pleasures]."—"Data of Ethics," Herbert Spencer, section 33.

How strange it is to look into a human face, and to look into human eyes, and to think that a son of the living God is veiled there—to think of the greatness of that creature, for the accomplishment of which all creation on earth has been in travail for these untold ages!

Often not anything extraordinary impresses us as we see the Christ-nature in a comrade; but wait; we see this kingdom of the soul only in its germ. The bulb of the tiger-lily is not over-pretty, but to the eyes that see the possibilities of the tiger-lily that bulb is a poem. The step from the highest morality of the natural man to the lowest round in the kingdom of the spiritual man is a stupendous one. John the Baptist was the greatest of those born of women; but the least in the new kingdom of the spiritual man is greater than he.

Do not say that you can not be born again. You can and must. It is natural to step into this kingdom, as natural as growth is. The natural response of the heart is Christian, says Tertullian. Our experience supports and justifies this necessity.

The great original sculptors of Greece, whom all the world now studies, stayed at home to study as Emerson would say, and did not bother much with going to Egypt or Mesopotamia. God is a rewarder of those that diligently seek Him, not by imitation, not outwardly, not with the noise of words that men may hear, but in the closet, in the silence of the inner chamber of the soul. Every man must find himself, and be himself; the new birth and growth in Christ make perfect each man's individuality. But there must be another conception of God than that against which the Buddhists warn us, that He is a "cow to be milked."

God hid Himself behind the world of our physical senses that we, free of all compulsion, might develop the spiritual man. When that is developed, God can safely reveal His infinite power and wisdom and goodness. Who could make free choice in the conscious presence of an infinite One?

Evolution is a sword that cuts both ways. It chooses, it condemns. The fittest survive. There are many called, but

few chosen. The most pathetic and pitiful thing in all the world is to see the multitudes striving to get out of the kingdom of the natural man what is not in it.

Punishment comes—it, too, is natural; and it is largely within. Degeneracy, through persistent wrong-choosing, is the law of nature—fixed, inevitable. If a man will not choose to ascend, he loses his power to choose.

IV

The scientist is short-sighted and narrow-sighted who walls science in at the boundary of his senses—a mole accounting for phenomena, and leaving out the eye; a Laura Bridgeman accounting for whatever came into her life by her two or three physical senses.

Foolish wise men, not to know that the surest of all proofs is to be looked for in inner experience; that the most real things in the world are made clear not by physical proof, but by life! Darwin reached the point where poetry and music were little to him; yet the world of music and of beauty are more certain than is Mont Blanc or Mount Washington; but there is only one way to know them, and that is to grow the faculties of music and beauty. To the Roman soldiers who may have heard it, how unsubstantial was the Sermon on the Mount; yet its truths of the brotherhood of man, of the fatherhood of God, of meekness, of loving, of justice, of faith in the inner things, outlasted the Roman armies, saw the empire ground to dust, and their speaker, one thousand nine hundred years afterward, by far the most potent personality that ever lived. The mother's love will outpull gravity, and yet what scientist has chemically analyzed it, or what dissecting-knife has revealed its whereabouts? There are brute women to whom this love is "unthinkable," "unknowable," but let them grow the mother-heart, and then they can think it, know it.

Foolish wise men, ye can discern the shadow of things; look up and behold the substance! Rochefort said to Gambetta: "Deafness is not politics." When will scientists learn that true science must have eyes and ears open to all experience within as well as without.

Once scientists among moles held a congress, and learnedly resolved that they would believe in nothing that could not be submitted for proof to their four senses. One learned mole with bated breath said: "There must be something above our four senses. I one day broke through the crust of the earth and felt strange sensations, and had a glimmering in the rudiments called eyes by our older philosophers." "Nonsense!" said a grayhead among them. "Let us have no transcendentalism; everything that is must be explained by sound, or by touch, or by smell, or by the taste. All this talk of a great central sun with light, making landscapes and from which all things come, we have no way of proving; and hence to believe it, or to admit it as an element in accounting for things, is unscientific. The scientific method, let us never forget, is to account for all things by the elements which come within the range of our four senses and the reasoning based upon these perceptions."

So it happens that to this day in the cosmic science accepted among moles the sun has nothing to do with the growth of plants, the formation of coal-beds, and the rotation of the seasons.

How imperfect that history that would content itself with writing a biography of the acorn, and never take into account the oak that comes from the acorn and for which the acorn exists! The oak reveals the acorn; without the oak the acorn is not explicable. How can any one understand the evolution of man and not consider the vastly greater segment of his nature, which is the non-material and spiritual? The scientist believes in the indestructibility of matter. The step is a short one to the belief in the indestructibility of spirit. He believes in substance infinitely extended; the step is not a long one to belief in the personality that is infinitely extended. He believes that in all matter is a "thinking substance." Is it harder to believe that over and in all things is a thinking spirit?* The scientist endows matter with the powers it

* "We adhere firmly to the pure, unequivocal monism of Spinoza: Matter, or infinitely extended substance, and spirit (or energy), or sensitive and thinking substance, are the two fundamental attributes or principal properties of the all-embracing divine essence of the world, the universal substance."—"The Riddle of the Universe," Ernst Haeckel, p. 21.

needs to do all these things, and then says it does all these things.

Yet science, when it comes to know, when it comes to take in all the facts, to go deep enough, and wide enough, and far enough, will be the arbiter. Creed, dogma, authority, must give way to it. Magellan said: "The Church declares the world is flat, but I have seen its shadow on the moon, and I had rather believe a shadow than the Church." That is true only when the Church makes provision for but a part of the truth, and when science is true to itself. The assumptions of science and the assumptions of the Church will have to be corrected by *experience*, the experience of the *whole* man.

V

Christ is not an idealism, but a living, throbbing, visible, audible Being—the real Christ; the body in Galilee was the shadow, the outward shell that could be crushed. The One now coming is the Mighty One who is out of the reach of stones and spears, the type-life and potent King of the kingdom of the spiritual man. And he who hath Him also hath power. "Ye shall receive *power*" (Acts i. 8). "Stephen, full of faith and *power*" (Acts vi. 8). "The kingdom of God is not in word, but in *power*" (1 Cor. iv. 20). Says Paul of those at Corinth who found fault with him: I will not know their speech, but their *power* (1 Cor. iv. 19). He who has not *power* is not of the kingdom of the spiritual man, for "whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world." This Christ is a present force in the world, producing changes, quickening and directing energies, and must be reckoned with. Christian civilization also proves itself by its *power*.

But to see Him this time we must have eyes and ears fitted to recognize the manifestations of the inner kingdom—the kingdom of all first causes and real forces. He is not coming with the noise of trumpets, nor with whirlwinds, nor with earthquakes; but with the silence of the growth of the mustard-seed, of the leaven, of the grain of corn reaching up to the blade and full corn in the ear.

There can be nothing more manifest to-day to the optic

nerve of the spiritual man than is this coming. The lightning flashing from the east to the west is not nearly so manifest.

Every event is alive with His appearing. His presence is the most evident thing in the world, the very splendor of the light hides Him. "Lo, I am with you alway!" is now known by millions to be a vital, stupendous fact. He is nearer to such a heart than the mother to the babe.

This coming is in harmony with recognizable law; belief in it is logic, is common sense. It would be extraordinary, miraculous, if He did not now come. When it is our will to do His will, we become the reincarnation of Christ, for "Christ is formed in us." When the dominating ones in a community, in a church, in a nation, in the world, are of this sort, you see Christ reincarnated in all these. Moses, David, John, Plato, Augustine, Savonarola, Bunyan, were great ideal dreamers, but they were also geniuses of common sense. These men were primarily men of faith and great good sense, not of credulity. They had the power and common sense to know that there were voices within, and to withdraw their attention from the voices without and give the real world a chance to be heard. They knew that the universe would fall into chaos and that stars would be ground to dust if these worlds were disobedient to law. They knew that there was an inner universe, and that there were inner laws infinitely more important. They knew it to be the A B C of common sense to conform to these inner laws. Christ was and is the embodiment of common sense; and so His followers become as they grow into the new creatures of the kingdom of the spiritual man.

There are voices within distinct and clear to those who have ears to hear; clearer than silver bells ringing up in air at midnight. One who has grown this spiritual nature ceases to talk about the inward world being silent or hid—yet there are clouds and doubts. These things must needs be—these assailed Christ to the last. And if angels do not also follow, ministering to us, it is because we have not reached the plane of spiritual seeing. Help is always near, and it should not be necessary for a prophet's hand to touch our eyes to enable

us to see the mountains covered with heavenly allies, or to enable us to know the signs of the times. There is no room for fear. Bismarck spoke with the accents of a prophet when he said: "Germany fears nothing but God." The cry is gone out to the ends of the earth: "Great is the soul of man; make way, make way!"

These signs of a mighty change are deepening and multiplying as we swing into the new century. The Jewish people were to be trodden underfoot until the inner kingdom of love should be established; that barbarism of hate is now rapidly dying.

Were we wise enough, events all around us would be to us prophecies of the coming of the triumphant God, of the kingdom of the spiritual man.

Watch! By watching we develop the ability to discern things beyond the senses.

Above every cloud the light is now breaking; the earth is rolling into the dawn of a marvelous day.

The yoke of ecclesiasticism is giving way to the yoke of Christ. Creed is the memory of the Church. The real yoke of Christ is not a burden; it has wings. He is sweetness and light. Let criticism have its way. The testing-time has come, give it welcome. A man must now stand a vital Christian, or a hypocrite, or an open enemy—that will be a great gain. Creeds to-day are trying to understand one another. Christianity is being reduced to its least common denominator, a living Christ. The church is finding it harder and harder to think of itself as a great-great-grandchild. It is coming to believe in its present experiences, and to write its own creeds for to-day, and not for to-morrow. Since God *is*, the Church and the world will not necessarily fall to pieces if they let go their props and scaffoldings. If there be no God, creeds and forms and ceremonies are necessities. A living God is efficient and sufficient.

There is no more unfailing sign of the nearness of Christ than the growth of loving beyond the provincialism of the family, the clan, the class, the nation. "Ye are brethren." All things in common, was not an impracticable dream, but a

fundamental law of the kingdom of the spiritual Man. We must organize sooner or later on that basis. We are speeding onward toward that sun. We feel its growing heat. If we do not love our brethren whom we have seen, how can we love God whom we have not seen? What do ye mean by the communion of saints, ye who pray it Sunday by Sunday? Spell it out. Brotherhood is not a fiction of the imagination. Communion is not a Pentecostal fantasy. A living Christ is to-day more than ever on earth an aggressively unifying force. Immensely human was Christ's message to man—Brotherhood and Fatherhood, and by those tokens we recognize His present footsteps.

Judge these things as you would the motions of the hands of the clock. Look back a half dozen centuries and make comparisons. War is recognized more and more as a barbarism, and its end is over yonder hill. The court of nations to settle wrongs is looming above the horizon. The nation that loves its fellow nations is also born of God.

The humanities are in order. Over one hundred and ten million dollars were contributed in the United States for educational and other charities within the last two years.* Nearly two million dollars were given to suffering Galveston; and Carnegie's immense benefactions are but one of the many indications of the full dawning of the day of living for others.

A single individual the other day, a member of an unpopular race, is wronged in France, and all the world is aroused, and flashes thunderbolts of wrath under oceans and across continents until there is a beginning to right the wrong. Mankind is rapidly becoming

> ". . . One in spirit, and in instinct bears along
> Around the earth's electric circle the swift flash of right and wrong."

The marvelous sowing about the Sea of Galilee is reaching its ripening. The leaven is leavening the whole lump. The mustard-seed reappears in hundreds and hundreds of millions of seed. Cuba is helped to freedom for its own sake; the Russian Czar—he at least—in sincerity says: "War should end." In business it is ceasing to be a maxim that the benefit

* From advance sheets of "Appleton's Annual Cyclopædia" for 1901.

of the one is ever opposed to the benefit of the many. We are learning that the Golden Rule and the law of self-preservation run parallel. Applied to commercialism, the Golden Rule is so to make money as to give a benefit also to him from whom you make it; and that, too, is common sense. The children of the inner kingdom never crowd: the more, the more room.

In all these things we see just the beginnings of the results of His coming: all men of one family, God the Father, and Christ the eldest Brother; the sacredness of truth, of the soul, of all life; the reality of the inner world.

Man has climbed up in countless ages by the slow processes of evolution to where he can use the powers of nature through his brain—becoming a coworker with God in guiding the processes of evolution. Now, being reborn into the inner kingdom, he starts on a new and infinitely higher destiny. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, the things that are laid up for those thus born.

With a boundless universe within and without, and an infinite God, and with an eternity to live and work in, many, many things can take place, and it is God's good pleasure that they shall never take place to our hurt. The creature of the kingdom of the spiritual man is injury-proof.

And the command is: "Be ye perfect as your Father is perfect"; ever approaching Him in countless ages and reaching Him at the end of eternity, had eternity an end; but since it has no end, in whatever distant period and however great the distance between us, God is still the Infinite One and we the finite ones.

Ah, how men err! The Roman Emperor, after his awful massacre of Christians, set up a column in memory of the extinction of the last Christian. But the Roman empire is in dust, and now the world is rapidly becoming wholly Christian; and were that Emperor alive, he, quite likely, would applaud the result. God's steppings are from star to star. Who knoweth His counsel?

We look back over the conflict of the ages of evolution; we now see, in the changing of the dunghill into shrubs and roses

and into food, the prophecy of all, and we marvel at our blindness in not knowing that the most manifest thing in all the world, and at all times, was God the Father working for good, whom again and again we have compelled to cry out in pain (for God can suffer pain): The reproaches of men have broken my heart. Looking backward, we begin to see the good in everything, that there has not been a fall of a sparrow without accompanying provision for the sparrow, and we grow enthusiastic and shout with the martyr of old: "Glory be to God for everything that happens!" Hand-in-hand we walk with the great Father over the ages of history, riding victorious over mountain-tops.

We see, modifying the words of John Fiske, that in the roaring loom of time, out of the endless web of events, strand by strand, was woven more and more clearly the living garment of God.

When Christ had passed beyond the grave, He said "Mary," and Mary said "Master"; they spake, they understood, tho death and the grave intervened. The world of the physical senses has no barrier that hinders knowing in the kingdom of the spiritual man.

"The Wandering Jew" is near the end of his wanderings.

As reasoned the Apostle:* If the Gentiles were cut out of the olive-tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a good olive-tree, how much more shall the Jews, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive-tree? For God is able to graft them in again. For I would not, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits: that blindness in part has happened to Israel, *until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.* AND SO ALL ISRAEL SHALL BE SAVED.

I. K. F.

New York, April 15, 1901.

* Rom. xi.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THERE has appeared from time to time in Europe, during the past thousand years, a mysterious individual—a sojourner in all lands, yet a citizen of none; professing the profoundest secrets of opulence, yet generally living in a state of poverty; astonishing every one by the vigor of his recollections, and the evidence of his intercourse with the eminent characters and events of every age, yet connected with none—without lineage, possession, or pursuit on earth—a wanderer and unhappy!

A number of histories have been written about him; some purely fictitious, others founded on ill-understood records. Germany, the land of mysticism, has toiled the most in this idle perversion of truth. Yet those narratives have been in general but a few pages, feebly founded on the fatal sentence of his punishment for an indignity offered to the Author of the Christian faith.

That exile lives! that most afflicted of the people of affliction yet walks this earth, bearing the sorrows of eighteen centuries on his brow—withering in soul for the guilt of an hour of madness. He has long borne the scoff of man in silence; he has heard his princely rank degraded to that of a menial, and heard without a murmur; he has heard his unhappy offense charged to deliberate malice, when it was but the misfortune of a zeal inflamed by the passions of his people; and he has bowed to the calumny as a portion of his punishment. But the time for this forbearance is no more. He feels himself at last wearing away; and feels, with a sensation like that of returning to the common fates of mankind, a desire to stand clear with his fellow men. In their presence he will never move again; to their justice, or their mercy, he will

never again appeal. The wound of his soul rests, never again to be disclosed, until that day when all beings shall be summoned and all secrets be known.

In his final retreat he has collected these memorials. He has concealed nothing; he has dissembled nothing; the picture of his hopes and fears, his weaknesses and his sorrows, is stamped here with sacred sincerity.

Other narratives may be more specious or eloquent, but this narrative has the supreme merit of reality. It may be doubted; it may even be denied. But this he must endure. He has been long trained to the severity of the world!

THE AUTHOR.

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BOOK
I

TARRY THOU TILL I COME

CHAPTER I

Salathiel Doomed to Immortality

Salathiel Feels Remorse

"TARRY THOU TILL I COME."[1] * The words shot through me—I felt them like an arrow in my heart—my brain whirled —my eyes grew dim. The troops, the priests, the populace, the world, passed away from before my senses like phantoms.

But my mind had a horrible clearness. As if the veil that separates the visible and invisible worlds had been rent in sunder, I saw shapes and signs for which mortal language has no name. The whole expanse of the future spread under my mental gaze. A preternatural light, a new power of mind, seemed to have been poured into my being; I saw at once the full guilt of my crime—the fierce folly—the mad ingratitude—the desperate profanation. I lived over again in frightful distinctness every act and instant of the night of my unspeakable sacrilege. I saw, as if written with a sunbeam, the countless injuries that in the rage of bigotry I had accumulated upon the victim; the bitter mockeries that I had devised; the cruel tauntings that my lips had taught the rabble; the pitiless malignity that had forbidden them to discover a trace of virtue where all virtue was. The blows of the scourge still sounded in my ears. Every drop of the innocent blood rose up in judgment against me.

Accursed be the night in which I fell before the tempter! Blotted out from time and eternity be the hour in which I took part with the torturers! Every fiber of my frame quivers, every drop of my blood curdles, as I still hear the echo

* The superior numbers appearing throughout the text refer to "Explanatory Notes" in the first pages of the Appendix.

Salathiel's Former Triumph

of the anathema, that on the night of wo sprang first from my lips, "HIS BLOOD BE UPON US, AND UPON OUR CHILDREN!"

I had headed the multitude; where others shrank, I urged; where others pitied, I reviled; I scoffed at the feeble malice of the priesthood; I scoffed at the tardy cruelty of the Roman; I swept away by menace and by scorn the human reluctance of the few who dreaded to dip their hands in blood. Thinking to do God service, and substituting my passions for my God, I threw firebrands on the hearts of a rash, jealous, and bigoted people—I triumphed!

In a deed which ought to have covered earth with lamentation, which was to make angels weep, which might have shaken the universe into dust, I triumphed! The decree was passed; but my frenzy was not so to be satiated. I loathed the light while the victim lived. Under the charge of "treason to Cæsar," I demanded instant execution of the sentence. —"Not a day of life must be given," I exclaimed, "not an hour;—death, on the instant; death!" My clamor was echoed by the roar of millions.

But in the moment of my exultation I was stricken. He who had refused an hour of life to the victim was, in terrible retribution, condemned to know the misery of life interminable. I heard through all the voices of Jerusalem—I should have heard through all the thunders of heaven—the calm, low voice, "Tarry thou till I come!"

I felt my fate at once! I sprang away through the shouting hosts as if the avenging angel waved his sword above my head. Wild songs, furious execrations, the uproar of myriads stirred to the heights of passion, filled the air; still, through all, I heard the pursuing sentence, "Tarry thou till I come," and felt it to be the sentence of incurable agony! I was never to know the shelter of the grave!

Immortality on Earth!—The compulsion of perpetual existence in a world made for change; to feel thousands of years bowing down my wretched head; alienated from all the hopes, enjoyments, and pursuits of man, to bear the heaviness of that existence which palls even with all the stimulants of the most vivid career of man; life passionless, exhausted, melancholy,

old. I was to be a wild beast; and a wild beast condemned to pace the same eternal cage! A criminal bound to the floor of his dungeon forever! I would rather have been blown about on the storms of every region of the universe. A Ceaseless Wanderer

Immortality on Earth!—I was still in the vigor of life; but must it be always so? Must not pain, feebleness, the loss of mind, the sad decay of all the resources of the human being, be the natural result of time? Might I not sink into the perpetual sick-bed, hopeless decrepitude, pain without cure or relaxation, the extremities of famine, of disease, of madness? —yet this was to be borne for ages of ages!

Immortality on Earth!—Separation from all that cheers and ennobles life. I was to survive my country; to see the soil dear to my heart violated by the feet of barbarians yet unborn, her sacred monuments, her trophies, her tombs, a scoff and a spoil. Without a resting-spot for the soles of my feet, I was to witness the slave, the man of blood, the savage of the desert, the furious infidel, rioting in my inheritance, digging up the bones of my fathers, trampling on the holy ruins of Jerusalem!

Immortality on Earth!—I was to feel the still keener misery of surviving all whom I loved; wife, child, friend, even to the last being with whom my heart could imagine a human bond; all that bore a drop of my blood in their veins were to perish in my sight, and I was to stand on the verge of the perpetual grave, without the power to sink into its refuge. If new affections could ever wind their way into my frozen bosom, it must be only to fill it with new sorrows; for those I loved must still be torn from me.—In the world I must remain, and remain alone!

Immortality on Earth!—The grave that closes on the sinner, closes on his sin. His weight of offense is fixed. No new guilt can gather on him there. But I was to know no limit to the weight that was already crushing me. The guilt of life upon life, the surges of an unfathomable ocean of crime, were to roll in eternal progress over my head. If the judgment of the great day was terrible to him who had passed but through the common measure of existence, what must be its

He Passes through Jerusalem

terrors to the wretch who was to appear loaded with the accumulated guilt of a thousand lives!

Overwhelmed with despair, I rushed through Jerusalem, with scarcely a consciousness of whither I was going. It was the time of the Passover, when the city was crowded with the multitude come to the great festival of the year. I felt an instinctive horror of the human countenance, and shunned every avenue by which the tribes came in. I at last found myself at the Gate of Zion, that leads southward into the open country. I had then no eyes for that wondrous portal which had exhausted the skill of the most famous Ionian sculptors, the master-work of Herod the Great. But I vainly tried to force my way through the crowds that lingered on their march to gaze upon its matchless beauty; portal alone worthy of the wonders to which it led, like the glory of an evening cloud opening to lead the eye upward to the stars.

On those days the Roman guard was withdrawn from the battlements, which I ascended to seek another escape; but the concourse, gathered there to look upon the entrance of the tribes, fixed me to the spot. Of all the strange and magnificent sights of earth, this entrance was the most fitted to swell the national pride of country and religion. The dispersion, ordained by Heaven for judgment on the crimes of our idolatrous kings, had, through that wonder-working power by which good is brought out of evil, planted our law in the remotest extremities of the world. Among its proselytes were the mighty of all regions, the military leaders, the sages, the kings; all, at least once in their lives, coming to pay homage to the great central city of the faith; and all coming with the pomp and attendance of their rank. The procession amounted to a number which threw after-times into the shade. Three millions of people have been counted at the Passover.

The diversities of the multitude were not less striking. Every race of mankind, in its most marked peculiarities, there passed beneath the eye. There came the long train of swarthy slaves and menials round the chariot of the Indian prince, clothed in the silks and jewels of regions beyond the Ganges. Upon them pressed the troop of African lion-hunters, half

naked, but with their black limbs wreathed with pearl and fragments of unwrought gold. Behind them, on camels, moved patriarchal groups, the Arab sheik, a venerable figure with his white locks flowing from beneath his turban, leading his sons, like our father Abraham, from the wilderness to the Mount of Vision. Then rolled on the glittering chariot of the Assyrian chieftain, a regal show of purple and gems, convoyed by horsemen covered with steel. The Scythian Jews, wrapped in the furs of wolf and bear, iron men of the North; the noble Greek, the perfection of the human form, with his countenance beaming the genius and beauty of his country; the broad and yellow features of the Chinese rabbins; the fair skins and gigantic forms of the German tribes; strange clusters of men unknown to the limits of Europe or Asia, with their black locks, complexions of the color of gold, and slight yet sinewy limbs, marked with figures of suns and stars struck into the flesh; all marched crowd on crowd; and in strong contrast with them, the Italian on the charger or in the chariot, urging the living stream to the right and left, with the haughtiness of the acknowledged master of mankind. The representative world was before me. But all those distinctive marks of country and condition, though palpably ineradicable by human means, were overpowered and mingled by the one grand impression of the place and the time In their presence was the City of Holiness; the Hill of Zion lifted up its palaces; above them ascended, like another city in a higher region of the air, that Temple to whose majesty the world could show no equal, to which the eyes of the believer were turned from the uttermost parts of the earth, in whose courts Solomon, the king of earthly kings for wisdom, had called down the blessing of the Most High, and it had descended on the altar in fire; in whose sanctuary the King whom heaven and the heaven of heavens can not contain was to make His future throne, and give glory to His people

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! when I think of what I saw thee then, and of what I have since seen thee—the spoiled, the desolate, the utterly put to shame; when I have seen the Roman plow driven through the soil on which stood the Holy

Latbiel moans Salem's cration

of Holies; the Saracen destroying even its ruins; the last, worst devastator, the barbarian of the Tatar desert, sitting in grim scorn upon the ramparts of the city of David; violating the tombs of the prophet and the king; turning up for plunder the soil, every blade of whose grass, every atom of whose dust, was sacred to the broken heart of Israel; trampling with savage cruelty my countrymen that lingered among its walls only that they might seek a grave in the ashes of the mighty,—I have felt my spirit maddened within me. I have made impious wishes; I have longed for the lightning to blast the tyrant. I still start from my bed when I hear the whirlwind, and send forth fierce prayers that its rage may be poured on the tents of the oppressor. I unconsciously tear away my white locks, and scatter them in bitterness of soul toward the East. In the wildness of the moment I have imagined every cloud that sailed along the night a minister of the descending vengeance. I have seen it a throne of terrible shapes flying on the wings of the wind, majestic spirits and kings of wrath hurrying through the heavens to pour down sulfurous hail and fire, as upon the cities of the Dead Sea. I have cried out with our prophet, as the vision swept along, "Who is he that cometh from Edom? with dyed garments from Bozra? he that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength! Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth the winepress?" and I have thought that I heard the answer: "I, that speak in righteousness, mighty to save! I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment; for the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come!"

Then, when the impulse passed away, my eyes have turned into fountains of tears, and I have wept until morning came, and the sounds of the world called back its recollections; and for the sacred hills and valleys that I had imagined in the darkness I saw only the roofs of some melancholy city, in which I was a forlorn fugitive; or a wilderness, with but the burning sands and the robber before me; or found myself

tossing on the ocean, not more fruitless than my heart, nor more restless than my life, nor more unfathomable than my wo. Yet to the last will I hope and love. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! even in my mirth, if I forget thee!

Beyond th City's Ga

But those were the thoughts of after-times. On that memorable and dreadful day I had no perception but of some undefinable fate which was to banish me from mankind. I at length forced my way through the pressure at the gate, turned to none of the kinsmen who called to me as I passed their chariots and horses, overthrew with desperate and sudden strength all who impeded my progress, and scarcely felt the ground till I had left the city behind, and had climbed, through rocks and ruins, the mountain that rose drearily before me, like a barrier shutting out the living world.

CHAPTER II

An Awakening and a Summons

TERROR had exhausted me; and throwing myself on the ground, under the shade of the palm-trees that crowned the summit of the hill, I fell into an almost instant slumber. But it was unrefreshing and disturbed. The events of the day again came before me, strangely mingled with those of my past life, and with others of which I could form no waking remembrance. I saw myself sometimes debased below man, like the great Assyrian king, driven out to feed upon the herb of the forest, and wandering for years exposed to the scorching sun by day and the dews that sank chilling upon my naked frame by night; I then seemed filled with supernatural power, and rose on wings till earth was diminished beneath me, and I felt myself fearfully alone. Still, there was one predominant sensation: that all this was for punishment, and that it was to be perpetual. At length, in one of my imaginary flights, I found myself whirled on the wind, like a swimmer down a cataract, in helpless terror into the bosom of a thunder-cloud. I felt the weight of the rolling vapors round me; I saw the blaze; I was stunned by a roar that shook the firmament.

My eyes suddenly opened, yet my dream appeared only to be realized by my waking. Thick clouds of heavy and heated vapor were rapidly rolling up from the precipices below; and at intervals a sound that I could not distinguish from distant thunder burst on the wind. But the sun was bright, and the horizon was the dazzling blue of the eastern heaven. As my senses slowly returned, for I felt like a man overpowered with wine, I was enabled to discover where I was. The discovery itself was terror. I had in my distraction fled to the mountain on which no Jew ever looked without shame and sorrow

for the crimes of the greatest king into whose nostrils the Almighty ever poured the spirit of life, but which a Jewish priest, as I was, could not touch without being guilty of defilement. I sat on the Mount of Corruption,[3] so-called from its having once witnessed the idolatries of our mighty Solomon, when, in his old age, he gave way to the persuasions of his heathen wives—that irreparable crime for which the kingdom was rent, and the strength of Israel scattered. I saw in the hollows of the hill the spaces, still bearing the marks of burning, and barren forever, on which the temples of Moloch, Chemosh, and Ashtaroth had stood in sight of the House of the living God. The very palm-trees under which I had snatched that wild and bitter sleep were the remnant of the groves in which the foul rites of the goddesses of Phenicia and Assyria once filled the air with midnight abomination, and horrid yells of human sacrifice, almost made more fearful by the roar of barbarian revel, the wild dissonance of timbrel and horn, the bacchanalian chorus of the priesthood and people of impurity. On the of Cor...

The vapors that rose hot and sickly before me were the smokes from the fires kindled in the valley of Hinnom; where the refuse of the animals slaughtered for the use of the city, and the other pollutions and remnants of things abominable to the Jew, were daily burned. The sullen and perpetual fires, the deadly fumes, and the aspects of the beings, chiefly public criminals, who were employed in this hideous task, gave the idea of the place of final evil. Our prophets, in their threats against the national betrayers, against the proud and the self-willed, the polluted with idols, and the polluted with that still darker and more incurable idolatry, the worship of the world, pointed to the valley of Hinnom! The Pharisee, when he denounced the unbelief and luxury of the lordly Sadducee, pointed to the valley of Hinnom! All—the Pharisee, the Essene, the Sadducee, in the haughty spirit that forgot the fallen state of Jerusalem, and the crimes that had lowered her; the hypocrite, the bigot, and the skeptic, alike mad with hopeless revenge, when they saw the Roman cohorts triumphing with their idolatrous ensigns through the paths once trod

A Call to Duty

by the holy, or were driven aside by the torrent of cavalry, and the gilded chariot on which sat some insolent proconsul fresh from Italy,—pointed to the valley of Hinnom! How often, as the days of Jerusalem hurried toward their end, and by some fatality the violences of the Roman governors became more frequent and intolerable, have I seen the groups of my countrymen, hunted into some byway of the city by the hoofs of the Roman horse, consuming with that inward wrath which was soon to flame out in such horrors, flinging up their wild hands, as if to upbraid the tardy heavens, gnashing their teeth, and with the strong contortions of the Oriental countenance, and lip scarcely audible from the force of its own convulsion, muttering conspiracy. Or, in despair of shaking off that chain which had bound the whole earth, how often have I seen them appealing to the endless future, and shrouding their heads in their cloaks, like sorcerers summoning up demons, each with his quivering hand stretched out toward the accursed valley, and every tongue groaning "Hinnom!"

While I lay upon the summit of the mountain, in a state which gave me the deepest impression of the parting of soul and body, I was startled by the sound of a trumpet. It was from the Temple, which, as the fires below sank with the growing heat of the day, was now visible to me. The trumpet was the signal of the third hour, when the first daily sacrifice was to be offered. It was the week of the class of Abiah, of which I was, and this day's service fell to me. Though I would have given all that I possessed on earth to be allowed to rest upon that spot, polluted as it was, and there molder away into the dust and ashes that I had made my bed, I dared not shrink from that most solemn duty of the priesthood.

I rose, but it was not until after many efforts that I was able to stand. I struggled along the summit of the ridge, holding by the stems of the palm-trees. The second trumpet sounded loudly, and was reechoed by the cliffs. I had now no time for delay, and was about to spring downward toward a path which wound round the head of the valley and beyond the fires, when my ears were again arrested by the peal that

had disturbed me in my sleep, and my glance, which commanded the whole circuit of the hills round Jerusalem, involuntarily looked for the thunder-cloud. The sky was without a stain; but the eminences toward the west, on whose lovely slopes of vineyard, rose, and orange grove my eye had so often reposed as on a vast Tyrian carpet tissued with purple and gold, were hung with gloom; a huge and sullen cloud seemed to be gathering over the heights, and flashes and gleams of malignant luster burst from its bosom. The cloud deepened, and the distant murmur grew louder and more continued

I hurried to the city gate. To my astonishment, I found the road, that I had left so choked up with the multitude, almost empty. The camels stood tethered in long trains under the trees, with scarcely an owner. The tents were deserted except by children and the few old persons necessary for their care. The mules and horses grazed through the fields without a keeper. I saw tents full of the animals and other offerings that the tribes brought up to the great feast, almost at the mercy of any hand that would take them away. Where could the myriads have disappeared which had covered the land a few hours before to the horizon?

The city was still more a subject of astonishment. A panic might have driven away the concourse of strangers, at a time when the violences of the Roman sword had given every Jew but too frequent cause for the most sensitive alarm. But all within the gate was equally deserted. The streets were utterly stripped of the regular inhabitants. The Roman sentinels were almost the only beings whom I could discover in my passage of the long avenue, from the foot of the upper city to the Mount of the Temple. All this was favorable to my extreme anxiety to escape every eye of my countrymen; yet I can not tell with what a throbbing of heart, and variety of feverish emotion, I at length reached the threshold of my dwelling. Though young, I was a husband and father. What might not have happened since the sunset of the evening before? for my evil doings—for which may He, with whom mercy lies at the right hand and judgment at the left, have mercy on me—had fatally occupied the night. I listened at the door, with my

heart upon my lips. I dared not open it. My suspense was at length relieved by my wife's voice; she was weeping. I fell on my knees, and thanked Heaven that she was alive.

But my infant! I thought of the sword that smote the first-born in the land of bondage, and felt that Judah, guilty as Egypt, might well dread its punishment. Was it for my first-born that the sobs of its angel mother had arisen in her loneliness? Another pause of bitter suspense—and I heard the laugh of my babe as it awoke in her arms. The first human sensation that I had felt for so many hours was almost overpowering; and without regarding the squalidness of my dress, and the look of famine and fatigue that must have betrayed where I had been, I should have rushed into the chamber. But at that moment the third trumpet sounded. I had now no time for the things of this world. I plunged into the bath, cleansed myself from the pollution of the mountain, hastily girt on me the sacerdotal tunic and girdle; and with the sacred fillet on my burning brow, and the censer in my shaking hand, passed through the cloisters and took my place before the altar.

CHAPTER III

Salathiel's Resolution in the Temple

Before Temp.

Of all the labors of human wealth and power devoted to worship, the Temple within whose courts I then stood was the most mighty. In the years of my unhappy wanderings, far from the graves of my kindred, I have seen all the most famous shrines of the great kingdoms of idolatry. Constrained by cruel circumstance, and the still sterner cruelty of man, I have stood before the altar of the Ephesian Diana, the masterpiece of Ionian splendor; I have strayed through the woods of Delphi, and been made a reluctant witness of the superb mysteries of that chief of the oracles of imposture. Dragged in chains, I have been forced to join the procession round the Minerva of the Acropolis, and almost forgot my chains in wonder at that monument of a genius which ought to have been consecrated only to the true God, by whom it was given. The temple of the Capitoline Jove, the Sancta Sophia of the Rome of Constantine, the still more stupendous fabric in which the third Rome still bows before the fisherman of Galilee—all have been known to my step, that knows all things but rest; but all were dreams and shadows to the grandeur, the dazzling beauty, the almost unearthly glory, of that Temple which once covered the "Mount of Vision" of the City of JEHOVAH.

At the distance of almost two thousand years, I have its image on my mind's eye with living and painful fulness. I see the court of the Gentiles circling the whole; a fortress of the purest marble, with its wall rising six hundred feet from the valley; its kingly entrance, worthy of the fame of Solomon; its innumerable and stately buildings for the priests and officers of the Temple, and above them, glittering like a succession of diadems, those alabaster porticoes and colon-

An interruption

nades in which the chiefs and sages of Jerusalem sat teaching the people, or walked, breathing the pure air, and gazing on the grandeur of a landscape which swept the whole amphitheater of the mountains. I see, rising above this stupendous boundary, the court of the Jewish women separated by its porphyry pillars and richly sculptured wall; above this, the separated court of the men; still higher, the court of the priests; and highest, the crowning splendor of all, the central TEMPLE,' the place of the Sanctuary and of the Holy of Holies, covered with plates of gold, its roof planted with lofty spear-heads of gold, the most precious marbles and metals everywhere flashing back the day, till Mount Moriah stood forth to the eye of the stranger approaching Jerusalem what it had been so often described by its bards and people, "a mountain of snow studded with jewels."

The grandeur of the worship was worthy of this glory of architecture. Four-and-twenty thousand Levites ministered by turns—a thousand at a time. Four thousand more performed the lower offices. Four thousand singers and minstrels, with the harp, the trumpet, and all the richest instruments of a land whose native genius was music, and whose climate and landscape led men instinctively to delight in the charm of sound, chanted the inspired songs of our warrior king, and filled up the pauses of prayer with harmonies that transported the spirit beyond the cares and passions of a troubled world.

I was standing before the altar of burnt-offerings, with the Levite at my side holding the lamb; the cup was in my hand, and I was about to pour the wine on the victim, when I was startled by the sound of hurried feet. In another moment the gate of the court was abruptly thrown back, and a figure rushed in; it was the High Priest,' but not in the robes of ceremony which it was customary for him to wear in the seasons of the greater festivals. He was covered with the common vesture of the priesthood, and was evidently anxious to use it for total concealment. His face was buried in the folds of his cloak, and he walked with blind precipitation toward the sanctuary. But he had scarcely reached it when a new feeling stopped

him, and he turned to the altar, where I was standing in mute surprise. The cloak fell from his visage; it was pale as death; the habitual sternness of feature which rendered him a terror to the people had collapsed into feebleness; and while he gazed on the flame, I thought I saw the glistening of a tear on a cheek that had never exhibited human emotion before. But no time was left for question, even if reverence had not restrained me. He suddenly grasped the head of the lamb, as was customary for those who offered up an expiation for their own sins; his lip, ashy white, quivered with broken prayer; then, snatching the knife from the Levite, he plunged it into the animal's throat, and with his hands covered with blood, and with a groan that sounded despair, again rushed distractedly to the porch of the Holy House, flung aside in fierce irreverence the veil of the sanctuary, and darted in.

There was a subterranean passage from the interior of the sanctuary to the High Priest's cloister, through which I conceived that he had gone. But, on passing near the porch, at the close of the sacrifice, I heard a cry of agony from within that penetrated my soul.

I had never loved the head of our priesthood. He was a haughty and hard-hearted man; insolent in his office, which he had obtained by no unsuspicious means, and a ready tool alike of the popular caprice and of the tyranny of our foreign masters. But he was a man; was a man of my own order; and was it for one like me to triumph over even the most abject criminal of earth? I ascended the steps of the porch, and, with a sinking heart and trembling hand, entered the sanctuary.

But—what I saw there I have no power to tell! To this moment the recollection overwhelms my senses. Words were not made to utter it. The ear of man was not made to hear it. Before me moved things mightier than of mortal vision, thronging shapes of terror, mysterious grandeurs, essential power, embodied prophecy! The Veil was rent in twain! How could man behold and live! When I lifted my face from the ground again, I saw but the High Priest. He was kneeling, with his hands clasped upon his eyes; his lips

strained wide, as if laboring to utter a voice; and his whole frame rigid and cold as a corpse. I vainly spoke, and attempted to rouse him; terror, or more than terror, had benumbed his powers; and, unwilling to suffer him to be seen in this extremity, I bore him in my arms to the subterranean.

But a tumult, of which I could scarcely conjecture the cause, checked me. The trampling of multitudes, and cries of fury and fear, echoed round the Temple; and in the sudden apprehension, the first and most fearful to the priest of Judah, that the Romans were about to commence their often-threatened plunder, I laid down my unhappy burden beside the door of the passage and returned to defend, or die with, our perishing glory. The sanctuary in which I stood was wholly lighted by the lamps round its walls. But when, at length, unable to suppress my alarm at the growing uproar, I went to the porch, I left comparative day behind me; a gloom deeper than that of tempest and sicklier than that of smoke overspread the sky. The sun, which I had seen like a fiery buckler hanging over the city, was utterly gone. Even while I looked the darkness deepened, and the blackness of night, of night without a star, fell far and fearful upon the horizon.

It has been my fate, and an intense part of my punishment, always to conceive that the calamities of nature and nations were connected with my crime.* I have tried to reason away this impression, but it has clung to me like an iron chain; nothing could tear it away that left the life; I have felt it hanging over my brain with the weight of a thunder-cloud. As I glanced into the gloom, the thought smote me that it was I who had brought this Egyptian plague, this horrid privation of the first element of life, upon my country, perhaps upon the world, perhaps never to be relieved; for it came condensing, depth on depth, till it seemed to have excluded all possibility of the existence of light; it was, like that of our old oppressors, darkness that might be felt, the darkness of a universal grave.

I formed my fierce determination at once, and resolved to fly from my priesthood, from my kindred, from my country; to linger out my days—my bitter, banished days—in some

wilderness, where my presence would not be a curse, where but the lion and the tiger should be my fellow dwellers, where the sands could not be made the more barren for my fatal tread, nor the fountains more bitter for my desperate and eternal tears. The singular presence of mind found in some men in the midst of universal perturbation—one of the most effective qualities of our nature, and attributed to the highest vigor of heart and understanding—is not always deserving of such proud parentage. It is sometimes the child of mere brute ignorance of danger, sometimes of habitual ferocity; in my instance it was that of madness—the fierce energy that leads the maniac safe over roofs and battlements. All in the Temple was confusion. The priests lay flung at the feet of the altar; or, clinging together in groups of helplessness and dismay, waited speechless for the ruin that was to visit them in this unnatural night. I walked through all, without a fear or a hope under heaven.

Through the solid gloom, and among heaps of men and sacred things cast under my feet, like the spoil of some stormed camp, I made my way to my dwelling, direct and unimpeded, as if I walked in the light of day. I found my wife in deeper terror at my long absence than even at the darkness. She sprang forward at my voice, and, falling on my neck, shed the tears of joy and love. But few words passed between us, for but few were necessary, to bid her with her babe to follow me. She would have followed me to the ends of the earth.

O Miriam, Miriam! how often have I thought of thee, in my long pilgrimage! How often, like that of a spirit descended to minister consolation to the wanderer, have I seen, in my midnight watching, thy countenance of more than woman's beauty! To me thou hast never died. Thy more than man's loftiness of soul; thy generous fidelity of love to a wayward and unhappy heart; thy patient treading with me along the path that I had sowed with the thorn and thistle for thy feet, but which should have been covered with the wealth of princes, to be worthy of thy loveliness and thy virtue—all rise in memory, and condemnation, before the chief of sinners.

and Age after age have I traveled to thy lonely grave; age after age have I wept and prayed upon the dust that was once perfection. In all the hardness forced upon me by a stern world; in all the hatred of mankind that the insolence of the barbarian and the persecutor has bound round my bosom like a mail of iron, I have preserved one source of feeling sacred—a solitary fount to feed the little vegetation of a withered heart: the love of thee; perhaps to be a sign of that regenerate time when the curse shall be withdrawn; perhaps to be in mercy the source from which that more than desert, thy husband's soul, shall be refreshed, and the barrenness flourish with the flowers of the paradise of God!

Throwing off my robe of priesthood, as I then thought, forever, I went forth, followed by my heroic wife and bearing my child in my arms. I had left behind me sumptuous things, wealth transmitted from a long line of illustrious ancestry. I cared not for them. Wealth a thousand times more precious was within my embrace. Yet, when I touched the threshold, the last sensation of divorce from all that I had been came over my mind. My wife felt the trembling of my frame, and, with a gentle firmness which in the hour of trouble often exalts the fortitude of woman above the headlong and inflamed courage of the warrior, she bade me be of good cheer. I felt her lips on my hand at the moment—the touch gave new energy to my whole being—and I bounded forward into the ocean of darkness.

Without impediment or error, I made my way over and among the crowds that strewed the court of the Gentiles. I heard many a prayer and many a groan; but I had now no more to do with man, and forced my way steadily to the great portal. Thus far, if I had been stricken with utter blindness, I could not have been less guided by the eye. But, on passing into the streets of the lower city, a scattered torch, from time to time, struggling through the darkness, like the lamp in a sepulcher, gave me glimpses of the scene. The broad avenue was encumbered with the living, in the semblance of the dead. All were prostrated or were in those attitudes into which men are thrown by terror beyond the strength or spirit

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All in the Temple was confusion.

See page 19.

of man to resist. The cloud that, from my melancholy bed above the valley of Hinnom, I had seen rolling up the hills, was this multitude. A spectacle had drawn them all by a cruel, a frantic, curiosity out of Jerusalem, and left it the solitude that had surprised me. Preternatural eclipse and horror fell on them, and their thousands madly rushed back to perish, if perish they must, within the walls of the City of Holiness. Still the multitude came pouring in; their distant trampling had the sound of a cataract, and their outcries of pain, and rage, and terror were like what I have since heard, but more feebly, sent up from the field of battle. A Scene of Disaster

I struggled on, avoiding the living torrent, and slowly treading my way wherever I heard the voices least numerous; but my task was one of extreme toil, and but for those more than the treasures of the earth to me, whose lives depended on my efforts, I should willingly have lain down and suffered the multitude to trample me into the grave. How long I thus struggled I know not. But a yell of peculiar and universal terror that burst round me made me turn my reluctant eyes toward Jerusalem. The cause of this new alarm was seen at once.

A large sphere of fire fiercely shot through the heavens, lighting its track down the murky air, and casting a disastrous and pallid illumination on the myriads of gazers below. It stopped above the city and exploded in thunder, flashing over the whole horizon, but covering the Temple with a blaze which gave it the aspect of a huge mass of metal glowing in the furnace. Every outline of the architecture, every pillar, every pinnacle, was seen with a livid and terrible distinctness. Again, all vanished. I heard the hollow roar of an earthquake; the ground rose and heaved under our feet. I heard the crash of buildings, the fall of fragments of the hills, and, louder than both, the groan of the multitude. I caught my wife and child closer to my bosom. In the next moment I felt the ground give way beneath me, a sulfurous vapor took away my breath, and I was swept intc the air in a whirlwind of dust and ashes!

CHAPTER IV

Salathiel Journeys Far from Jerusalem

Salathiel Returns to Consciousness

When I recovered my senses, all was so much changed round me that I could scarcely be persuaded that either the past or the present was not a dream. I had no consciousness of any interval between them, more than that of having closed my eyes at one instant, to open them at the next. Yet the curtains of a tent waved round me, in a breeze fragrant with the breath of roses and balsam-trees. Beyond the gardens and meadows, from which those odors sprang, a river shone, like a path of lapis lazuli, in the calm effulgence of the western sun. Tents were pitched, from which I heard the sounds of pastoral instruments; camels were drinking and grazing along the riverside; and turbaned men and maidens were ranging over the fields, or sitting on the banks to enjoy the cool of the delicious evening.

While I tried to collect my senses and discover whether this was more than one of those sports of a wayward fancy which tantalize the bed of the sick mind, I heard a low hymn, and listened to the sounds with breathless anxiety. The voice I knew at once—it was Miriam's. But in the disorder of my brain, and the strange circumstances which had filled the latter days, in that total feebleness too in which I could not move a limb or utter a word, a persuasion seized me that I was already beyond the final boundary of mortals. All before me was like that paradise from which the crime of our great forefather had driven man into banishment. I remembered the convulsion of the earth in which I had sunk, and asked myself, Could man be wrapped in flame and the whirlwind that tore up mountains like the roots of flowers, and yet live?

In this perplexity I closed my eyes to collect my thoughts, and probably exhibited some strong emotion of countenance,

for I was roused by a cry: "He lives! He lives!" I looked up—Miriam stood before me, clasping her lovely hands with the wildness of joy unspeakable, and shedding tears that, large and lustrous, fell down her glowing cheeks like dew upon the pomegranate. She threw herself upon my pillow, kissed my forehead with lips that breathed new life into me; then, pressing my chill hand between hers, knelt down and with a look worthy of that heaven on which it was fixed, radiant with beauty, and holiness, and joy as the face of an angel, offered up her thanksgiving.

The explanation of the scene that perplexed me was given in a few words, interrupted only by tears and sighs of delight. With the burst of the earthquake the supernatural darkness had cleared away. I was flung under the shelter of one of those caves which abound in the gorges of the mountains round Jerusalem. Miriam and her infant were flung by my side, yet unhurt. While I lay insensible in her arms, she, by singular good fortune, found herself surrounded by a troop of our kinsmen returning from the city, where terror had suffered but few to remain. They placed her and her infant on their camels. Me they would have consigned to the sepulcher of the priests; but Miriam was not to be shaken in her purpose to watch over me until all hope was gone. I was thus carried along—and they were now three days on their journey homeward. The landscape before me was Samaria.

My natural destination would have been the cities of the priests which lay to the south, bordering upon Hebron. In those thirteen opulent and noble residences allotted to the higher ministry of the Temple, they enjoyed all that could be offered by the munificent wisdom of the state—wealth that raised them above the pressures of life, yet not so great as to extinguish the desire of intellectual distinction or the love of the loftier virtues. The means of mental cultivation were provided for them with more than royal liberality. Copies of the sacred books, multiplied in every form, and adorned with the finest skill of the pencil and the sculptor in gold and other precious materials, attested at once the

The Power of Art

reverence of the nation for its law, and the perfection to which it had brought the decorative arts. The works of strangers eminent for genius or knowledge, or even for the singularity of their subject, were not less to be found in those stately treasure-houses of mind. There the priest might relax his spirit from the sublimer studies of his country by the bold and brilliant epics of Greece, the fantastic passion and figured beauty of the Persian poesy, or the alternate severity and sweetness of the Indian drama—that startling union of all lovely images of nature, the bloom and fragrance of flowers, the hues of the Oriental heaven, and the perfumes of isles of spice and cinnamon, with the grim and subterranean terrors of a gigantic idolatry. There he might spread the philosophic wing from the glittering creations of Grecian metaphysics, to their dark and early oracles in the East; or, stopping in his central flight, plunge into the profound of Egyptian mystery, where science lies, like the mummy, wrapped in a thousand folds that preserve the form, but preserve it with the living principle gone.

Music, of all pleasures the most intellectual, that glorious painting to the ear, that rich mastery of the gloomier emotions of our nature, was studied by the priesthood with a skill that influenced the habits of the country. How often have my fiercest perturbations sunk at the sounds that once filled the breezes of Judea! How often, when my brain was burning and the blood ran through my veins like molten brass, have I been softened down to painless tears by the chorus from our hills, the mellow harmonies of harp and horn blending with the voices of the youths and maidens of Israel! How often have I in the night listened, while the chant, ascending with a native richness to which the skill of other nations was dissonance, floated upward like a cloud of incense, bearing the aspirations of holiness and gratitude to the throne of Him whom man hath not seen nor can see!

But those times are sunk deep in the great gulf that absorbs the happiness and genius of man. I have since traversed my country in its length and breadth; I have marked with my weary feet every valley, and made my restless bed

upon every hill from Idumea to Lebanon, and from the Assyrian sands to the waters of the Mediterranean; yet the harp and voice were dead. I heard sounds on the hills, but they were the cries of the villagers flying before some tyrant gatherer of a tyrant's tribute. I heard sounds in the midnight, but they were the howl of the wolf and the yell of the hyena reveling over the naked and dishonored graves, which the infidel had given, in his scorn, to the people of my fathers. The Glory of the Past

But the study to which the largest expenditure of wealth and labor was devoted was, as it ought to be, that of the sacred books of Israel. It only makes me rebellious against the decrees of fate to think of the incomparable richness and immaculate character of the volumes over which I have so often hung, and look upon the diminished and degraded exterior in which their wisdom now lies before man. Where are now the cases covered with jewels, the clasps of topaz and diamond; the golden arks in which the volume of the hope of Israel lay, too precious not to be humiliated by the contact with even the richest treasure of earth? Where are the tissued curtains, which hid, as in a sanctuary, that mighty roll, too sacred to be glanced on by the casual eye? But, the spoiler—the spoiler! The Arab, the Parthian, the human tiger of the north, that lies crouching for a thousand years in the sheepfold of Judah! Is there not a sword? Is there not a judgment? Terribly will it judge the oppressor.

The home of my kinsmen was in the allotment of Naphtali. The original tribe had revolted in the general schism of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, and was swept into the Assyrian captivity. But on the restoration by Cyrus, fragments of all the captive tribes returned and were suffered to resume their lands. Misfortune wrought its moral on them; the chief families pledged their allegiance once more to Judah, and were exemplary in paying homage to the spirit and ordinances of their religion.

We hastened through Samaria. The rancorous enmity borne by the Samaritans to the subjects of Judah, for ages made all intercourse between Jerusalem and the north difficult. It was often totally interrupted by war; it was dan-

Alertness the Roman

gerous in peace, and the ferocious character of the population and the bitter antipathy of the government made it to the Jew a land of robbers.' But among the evils of the Roman conquest was mingled this good, that it suffered no subordinate tyranny. Its sword cut away at a blow all those minor oppressions which make the misery of provincial life. If the mountain robber invaded the plain, as was his custom of old, the Roman cavalry were instantly on him with the spear, until he took refuge in the mountains; if he resisted in his native fastnesses, the legionaries pursued him with torch and sword, stifled him if he remained in his cave, or stabbed him at its entrance. If quarrels arose between villages, the cohorts burned them to the ground; and the execution was done with a promptitude and completeness that less resembled the ordinary operations of war than the work of superhuman power. The Roman knowledge of our disturbances was instantaneous. Signals established on the hills conveyed intelligence with the speed of light, from the remotest corners of the land to their principal stations. Even in our subsequent conspiracies, the first knowledge that they had broken out was often conveyed to their partizans in the next district by the movement of the Roman troops. Well had they chosen the eagle for their ensign. They rushed with the eagle's rapidity on their victim; and when it was stretched in blood they left the spot of vengeance, as if they had left it on the wing. Their advance had the rapidity of the most hurried retreat and the steadiness of the most secure triumph. Their retreat left nothing behind but the marks of their irresistible power.

All the armies of the earth have since passed before me. I have seen the equals of the legions in courage and discipline, and their superiors in those arms by which human life is at the caprice of ambition. But their equals I have never seen, in the individual fitness of the soldier for war; in his fleetness, muscular vigor, and expertness in the use of his weapons; in his quick adaptation to all the multiplied purposes of the ancient campaign—from the digging of a trench or the management of a catapult to the assault of a citadel;

Salathiel Passes through Samaria

in his iron endurance of the vicissitudes of climate; in the length and regularity of his marches; or in the rapidity, boldness, and dexterity of his maneuver in the field. Yet it is but a melancholy tribute to the valor of my countrymen to record the Roman acknowledgment, that of all the nations conquered by Rome Judea bore the chain with the haughtiest dignity, and most frequently and fiercely contested the supremacy of the sword.

Under that stern supremacy, the Samaritan had long rested and flourished in exemption from the harassing cruelty of petty war. We now passed with our long caravan unguarded, and moved at will through fields rich with the luxuriance of an Eastern summer, where our fathers would have scarcely ventured but with an army. I made no resistance to being thus led away to a region so remote from my own. To have returned to the cities of the priests would have but given me unceasing agony. Even the gates of Jerusalem were to my feelings anathema. The whole fabric of my mind had undergone a revolution. Like a man tossed at the mercy of the tempest, I sought but a shore—and all shores were alike to him who must be an exile forever.

CHAPTER V

Eleazar Learns of Salathiel's Renunciation

THE country through which we passed, after leaving the boundaries of Samaria—where, with all its peace, no Jew could tread but as in the land of strangers—was new to me. My life had been till now spent in study or in serving the altar; and I had heard, with the usual and unwise indifference of men devoted to books, the praise of the picturesque and stately provinces that still remained to our people. I was now to see for myself, and was often compelled, as we advanced, to reproach the idle prejudice that had so long deprived me, and might forever deprive so many of my consecrated brethren, of an enjoyment cheering to the human heart and full of lofty and hallowed memory to the men of Israel. As we passed along, less traveling than wandering at pleasure, through regions where every winding of the marble hill or descent of the fruitful valley showed us some sudden and romantic beauty of landscape, my kinsmen took a natural pride in pointing out the noble features that made Canaan a living history of Providence.

What were even the trophy-covered hills of Greece or the monumental plains of Italy to the hills and plains where the memorial told of the miracles and the presence of the Supreme? "Look to that rock," they would exclaim; "there descended the angel of the Presence! On the summit of that cloudy ridge stood Ezekiel, when he saw the vision of the latter days. Look to yonder cleft in the mountains; there fell the lightning from heaven on the Philistine." In our travel we reached a valley, a spot of singular beauty and seclusion, blushing with flowers and sheeted with the olive from its edge down to a stream that rushed brightly through its bosom. There was no dwelling of man in it, but on a

gentler slope of the declivity stood a gigantic terebinth-tree. More than curiosity was attracted to this delicious spot, for the laughter and talk of the caravan had instantly subsided at the sight. All, by a common impulse, dismounted from their horses and camels; and though it was still far from sunset, the tents were pitched and preparations made for prayer. The spot reminded me of the valley of Hebron, sacred to the Jewish heart as the burial-place of Abraham, Sarah, and Isaac. May they sleep in the bosom of the Lord! The terebinth-tree, under which the greatest of the patriarchs sat and talked with the angels—the fountain—the cave of Macpelah, in which his mortal frame returned to the earth, to come again in glory, appeared to lie before me.

A Prayer in the Valley

From the day of my unspeakable crime, I had never joined in prayer with my people. Yet, I was still a believer in the faith of Israel. I even clung to it with the nervous violence of one who, in a shipwreck, feels that his only hope is the plank in his grasp, and that some more powerful hand is tearing even that plank away. But the sight of human beings enjoying the placid consolations of prayer had from the first moment overwhelmed me with so keen a sense of my misfortune—the pious gentleness of attitude and voice, the calm uplifted hand, and low and solemn aspiration were in so deep a contrast to the involuntary wildness and broken utterings of a heart bound in more than adamantine chains, that I shrank from the rebuke and groaned in solitude.

I went forth into the valley, and was soon lost in its thick vegetation. The sound of the hymn that sank down in mingled sweetness with the murmuring of the evening air through the leaves, and the bubbling of the brook below, alone told me that I was near human beings. I sat upon a fragment of turf, embroidered as never was kingly footstool, and with my hands clasped over my eyes, to remove from me all the images of life, gave way to that visionary mood of mind in which ideas come and pass in crowds without shape, leaving no more impression than the drops of a sun-shower on the trees. I had remained long in this half-dreaming confusion, and had almost imagined myself transported to some intermediate

realm of being, where a part of the infliction was that of being startled by keen flashes of light from some upper world, when I was roused by the voice of Eleazar, the brother of Miriam, at my side. His manly and generous countenance expressed mingled anxiety and gladness at discovering me. "The whole camp," said he, "have been alarmed at your absence, and have searched for these three hours through every part of our day's journey. Miriam's distraction at length urged me to leave her, and it was by her instinct that I took my way down the only path hitherto unsearched, and where, indeed, from fear or reverence of the place, few but myself would have willingly come." He called to an attendant, and, sending him up the side of the valley with the tidings, we followed slowly, for I was still feeble. As we emerged into a more open space, the moon lying on masses of cloud, like a queen pillowed on couches of silver, showed me, in her strong illumination of the forest, the flashes which had added to the bewildered pain of my reverie. While I talked with natural animation of the splendor of the heavens, and pointed out the line and figures on the moon's disk, which made it probable that it was, like earth, a place of habitation, he suddenly pressed my hand, and stopping, with his eyes fixed on my face: "How," said he, "does it happen, my friend, my brother Salathiel?" I started, as if my name, the name of my illustrious ancestor, direct in descent from the father of the faithful, were an accusation. He proceeded, with an ardent pressure of my quivering hand: "How is it to be accounted for that you, with such contemplations and the knowledge that gives them the dignity of science, can yet be so habitually given over to gloom? Serious crime I will not believe in you, though the best of us are stained. But your character is pure; I know your nature to be too lofty for the degenerate indulgence of the passions, and Miriam's love for you, a love passing that of women, is in itself a seal of virtue. Answer me, Can the wealth, power, or influence of your brother and his house, nay of his tribe, assist you?"

I was silent. He paused, and we walked on a while, without a sound but that of our tread among the leaves; but his

mind was full, and it would have way. "Salathiel," said he, "you do injustice to yourself, to your wife, and to your friends. This gloom that sits eternally on your forehead must wear away all your uses in society; it bathes your incomparable wife's pillow in tears, and it disheartens, nay distresses, us all. Answer me as one man of honor and integrity would another. Have you been disappointed in your ambition? I know your claims. You have knowledge surpassing that of a multitude of your contemporaries; you have talents that ought to be honored; your character is unimpeached and unimpeachable. Such things ought to have already raised you to eminence. Have you found yourself thwarted by the common artifice of official life? Has some paltry sycophant crept up before you by the oblique path that honor disdains? Or have you felt yourself an excluded and marked man, merely for the display of that manlier vigor, richer genius, and more generous and sincere impulse of heart which to the conscious inferiority of the rabble of understanding is gall and wormwood? Or have you taken too deeply into your resentment the common criminal negligence that besets common minds in power, and makes them carelessly fling away upon incapacity, and guiltily withhold from worth, the rewards which were entrusted to them as a sacred deposit for the encouragement of national ability and personal virtue?"

Speaks Salathiel's Gloom

I strongly disavowed all conceptions of the kind, and assured him that I felt neither peculiar merits nor peculiar injuries. "I have seen too much of what ambition and worldly success were made of, to allow hope to excite or failure to depress me. I am even," added I, "so far from being the slave of that most vulgar intemperance of a deranged heart, the diseased craving for the miserable indulgences of worldly distinction, that would to Heaven I might never again enter the gates of Jerusalem!"

He started back in surprise. The confession had been altogether unintended, and I looked up to see the burst of Jewish wrath descending upon me. I saw none. My kinsman's fine countenance was brightened with a lofty joy. "Then you have renounced. But no, it is yet too soon. At your

Beside the Tomb of Isaiah

age, with your prospects, can you have renounced the career offered to you among the rulers of Israel?"

"I have renounced."

"Sincerely, solemnly, upon conviction?"

"From the bottom of my soul, now and forever!"

We had reached the open space in front of the terebinth-tree that stood in majesty, extending its stately branches over a space cleared of all other trees, a sovereign of the forest. In silence he led me under the shade to a small tomb, on which the light fell with broken luster. "This," said he, "is the tomb of the greatest prophet on whose lips the wisdom of Heaven ever burned. There sleeps Isaiah! There is silent the voice that for fifty years spoke more than the thoughts of man in the ears of a guilty people. There are cold the hands that struck the harp of more than mortal sounds to the glory of Him to whom earth and its kingdoms are but as the dust of the balance. There lies the heart which neither the desert, nor the dungeon, nor the teeth of the lion, nor the saw of Manasseh, could tame—the denouncer of our crimes—the scourge of our apostasy—the prophet of that desolation which was to bow the grandeur of Judah to the grave as the tree of the mountain in the whirlwind. Saint and martyr, let my life be as thine; and if it be the will of God, let my death be even as thine!"

He threw himself on his knees and remained in prayer for a time. I knelt with him, but no prayer would issue from my heart. He at length rose, and, leading me into the moonlight, said in a low voice: "Is there not, where the holy sleep, a holiness in the very ground? I waive all the superstitious feelings of the idolater, worshiping the dust of the creature, for the King alike of all. I pass over the natural human homage for the memory of those who have risen above us by the great qualities of their being. But if there are supernal influences acting upon the mind of man; if the winged spirits that minister before the throne still descend to earth on missions of mercy, I will believe that their loved place is round the grave where sleeps the mortal portion of the holy. In all our journeys to the Temple, it has been the

custom of our shattered and humiliated tribe to pause beside this tomb, and offer up our homage to that Mightiest of the mighty who made such men for the lights of Israel!" He then earnestly repeated the question: "Have you abandoned your office?" "Yes," was the answer, "totally, with full purpose never to resume it. In your mountains I will live with you, and with you I will die." Memory smote me as I pronounced the word; the refuge of the grave was not for me!

"Then," said he, "you have relieved my spirit of a load; you are now my more than brother." He clasped me in his arms. "Yes, Salathiel, I know that your high heart must have scorned the prejudices of the Scribe and the Pharisee; you must have seen through and loathed the smiling hypocrisy, the rancorous bigotry, and the furious thirst of blood that are hourly sinking us below the lowest of the heathen. Hating the tyranny of the Roman, as I live this hour, I would rather see the city of David inhabited by none but the idolater, or delivered over to the curse of Babylon and made the couch of the lion and the serpent, than see its courts filled with those impious traitors to the spirit of the law, those cruel extortioners under the mask of self-denial, those malignant revelers in human torture under the name of insulted religion, whose joy is crime, and every hour of whose being but wearies the long-suffering of God and precipitates the ruin of my country."

He drew from his bosom and unrolled in the moonlight a small copy of the Scriptures. "My brother," said he, "have you read the holy prophecies of him by whose grave we stand?" My only answer was a smile; they were the chief study of the priesthood. "True," said he; "no doubt, you have read the words of the prophet. But wisdom is known of her children, and of them alone. Read here."

I read the famous Haphtorah:* "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground; he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should de-

The Future Deliverer of Judah

sire him. He is the despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows!"

He stopped me, laying his hand on my arm; I felt his strong nerves tremble like an infant's. "Of whom hath the prophet spoken?" uttered he in a voice of intense anxiety. "Of whom? Of the Deliverer that is to restore Judah; Him that is to come," was my answer. "Him that *is to come*—still *to come?*" he exclaimed. "God of heaven, must the veil be forever on the face of Thy Israel? When shall our darkness be light, and the chain of our spirit be broken!" The glow and power of his countenance sank; he took the roll with a sigh, and replaced it in his robe; then with his hands clasped across his bosom, and his head bowed, he led our silent way up the side of the valley.

CHAPTER VI

Salathiel and His People

The Positi of the Je

We soon reached the hill country, and our road passed through what were once the allotments of Issachar, Zebulun, and Asher, but by the Roman division was now Upper Galilee. My health had been rapidly restored by the exercise and the balmy air. My more incurable disease was prevented by the journey from perhaps totally engrossing my mind. Of all the antagonists to mental depression, traveling is the most vigorous; not the flight from place to place, as if evil were to be outrun, nor the enclosure of the weary of life in some narrow vehicle that adds fever and pestilence to heaviness of heart, but the passing at our ease through the open air and bright landscape of a new country. To me the novelty and loveliness of the land were combined with the memory of the most striking events in human record. I had, too, the advantage of a companionship which would have enlivened travel through the wilderness—brave and cheerful men and women on whose minds and forms nature laid her finest stamp of beauty.

The name of Jew is now but another title for humiliation. Who that sees that fallen thing, with his countenance bent to the ground and his form withered of its comeliness, tottering through the proud streets of Europe in some degrading occupation, and clothed in the robes of the beggared and the despised, could imagine the bold figures and gallant bearing of the lion-hunters, with whom, in the midst of shouts and songs of careless joy, I spurred my barb up the mountain-paths of Galilee! Yet, fallen as he is, the physiognomy of the Jew retains a share of its original beauty, sufficient to establish the claim of the people to have been the handsomest race on earth. Individuals of superior comeliness may often be found

The Semitic Type of Beauty

among the multitudes of mankind. But no nation, nor distinct part of any nation, can rival an equal number of the unhappy exiles of Israel in the original impress of that hand which made man only a little lower than the angels. To conceive the Jew as he was, we should picture the stern and watchful contraction of the dark eye expanded; the fierce and ridgy brow lowering no more; the lip no longer gathered in habitual fear or scorn; the cheek no longer sallow with want or pining, and the whole man elevated by the returning consciousness that he has a rank among nations. All his deformities have been the birth of his misfortunes. What beauty can we demand from the dungeon? What dignity of aspect from the hewers of wood and drawers of water for mankind? Where shall we seek the magnificent form and illumined countenance of the hero and the sage—from the heart cankered by the chain, from the plundered, the enslaved, the persecuted of two thousand years?

Of the daughters of my country I have never seen the equals in beauty. Our blood was Arab, softened down by various changes of state and climate, till it was finally brought to perfection in the most genial air and the most generous soil of the globe. The vivid features of the Arab countenance, no longer attenuated by the desert, assumed, in the plenty of Egypt, that fulness and fine proportion which still belongs to the dwellers by the Nile; but the true change was on our entrance into the promised land. Peace, the possession of property, days spent among the cheerful and healthful occupations of rural life, are in themselves productive of the finer developments of the human form—a form whose natural tendency is to beauty. But our nation had an additional and an unshared source of nobleness of aspect: it was free.

The state of man in the most unfettered republics of the ancient world was slavery compared with the magnanimous and secure establishment of the Jewish commonwealth. During the three hundred golden years, from Moses to Samuel—before we were given over to the madness of innovation for our sins, and the demand of an earthly diadem—the Jew was free in the loftiest sense of freedom; free to do all good; re-

stricted only from evil; every man pursuing the unobstructed course pointed out by his genius or his fortune; every man protected by laws inviolable, or whose violation was instantly visited with punishment by the Eternal Sovereign alike of ruler and people.

Freedom! twin sister of Virtue, thou brightest of all the spirits that descended in the train of Religion from the throne of God; thou that leadest up man again to the early glories of his being; angel, from the circle of whose presence happiness spreads like the sunrise over the darkness of the land; at the waving of whose scepter, knowledge and peace and fortitude and wisdom descend upon the wing; at the voice of whose trumpet the more than grave is broken and slavery gives up her dead,—when shall I see thy coming? When shall I hear thy summons upon the mountains of my country, and rejoice in the regeneration and glory of the sons of Judah? I have traversed nations, and, as I set my foot upon their boundary, I have said, "Freedom is not here!" I saw the naked hill, the morass steaming with death, the field covered with weedy fallow, the sickly thicket encumbering the land; I saw the still more infallible signs, the downcast visage, the form degraded at once by loathsome indolence and desperate poverty; the peasant, cheerless and feeble in his field, the wolfish robber, the population of the cities crowded into huts and cells, with pestilence for their fellow; I saw the contumely of man to man, the furious vindictiveness of popular rage, and I pronounced at the moment, "This people is not free!"

In the various republics of heathen antiquity, the helot living under the yoke of oppression, and the born bondsman lingering out life in thankless toil, at once put to flight all conceptions of freedom. In the midst of altars fuming to liberty, of harangues glowing with the most pompous protestations of scorn for servitude, of crowds inflated with the presumption that they disdained a master, the eye was insulted with the perpetual chain. The temple of Liberty was built upon the dungeon. Rome came, and unconsciously avenged the insulted name of freedom; the master and the slave were

Freedom in me bowed down together, and the dungeon was made the common dwelling of all.

In the Italian republics of after ages, I saw the vigor that, living in the native soil of empire, has always sprung up on the first call. The time has changed since Italy poured its legions over the world. The volcano was now sleeping; yet the fire still burned within its womb, and threw out in its invisible strength the luxuriant qualities of the land of power. The innate Roman passion for sovereignty was no longer to find its triumphs in the field; it rushed up the paths of a loftier and more solid glory, with a speed and a strength that left mankind wondering below. The arts, adventure, legislation, literature in all its shapes, of the subtle, the rich, and the sublime, were the peaceful triumphs whose laurels will entwine the Italian brow when the wreath of the Cæsars is remembered but as a badge of national folly and individual crime.

But those republics knew freedom only by name. All, within a few years from their birth, had abandoned its living principles—justice, temperance, and truth. I saw the soldiery of neighbor cities marching to mutual devastation, and I said, "Freedom is not here!" I saw abject privation mingled with boundless luxury; in the midst of the noblest works of architecture, the hovel; in the pomps of citizens covered with cloth of gold, gazing groups of faces haggard with beggary and sin; I saw the sold tribunal, the inexorable state prison, the established spy, the protected assassin, the secret torture; and I said, "Freedom is not here!" The pageant filled the streets with more than kingly blazonry, the trumpets flourished, the multitude shouted, the painter covered the walls with immortal emblems, in honor of Freedom; I pointed to the dungeon, the rack, and the dagger! Bitterer and deeper sign than all, I pointed to the exile of exiles, the broken man, whom even the broken trample, of all the undone the most undone—my outcast brother in the blood of Abraham!

I am not about to be his defender; I am not regardless of his tremendous crime; I can not stand up alone against the voice of universal man, which has cried out that thus it shall

be; but I say it from the depths of my soul, and as I hope for rest to my miseries, that I never saw freedom survive in that land which loved to smite the Jew! The Union of Judea

I saw one republic more, the mightiest and the last; for the justice of Heaven on the land, the most terrible; for the mercy of Heaven to mankind, the briefest in its devastation. But there all was hypocrisy that was not horror; the only equal rights were those of the equal robber; the sacred figure of Liberty veiled its face; and the offering on its violated shrine was the spoil of honor, bravery, and virtue.

The daughters of our nation, sharing in the rights of its sons, bore the lofty impression that virtuous freedom always stamps on the human features. But they had the softer graces of their sex in a degree unequaled in the ancient world. While the woman of the East was immured behind bolts and bars, from time immemorial a prisoner, and the woman of the West was a toy, a savage, or a slave, our wives and maidens enjoyed the intercourses of society, which their talents were well calculated to cheer and adorn. They were skilled on the harp; their sweet voices were tuned to the richest strains of earth; they were graceful in the dance; the writings of our bards were in their hands; and what nation ever possessed such illustrious founts of thought and virtue! But there was another and a still higher ground for that peculiar expression which makes their countenance still lighten before me, as something of more than mortal beauty. The earliest consciousness of every Jewish woman was, that she might, in the hand of Providence, be the sacred source of a blessing and a glory that throws all imagination into the shade; that of her might be born a Being, to whom earth and all its kings should bow—the more than man! the more than angel! veiling for a little time His splendors in the form of man, to raise Israel to the scepter of the world, to raise that world into a renewed paradise, and then to resume His original glory, and be Sovereign, Creator, God—all in all!

This consciousness, however dimmed, was never forgotten; the misfortunes of Judah never breaking the strong link by which we held to the future. The reliance on predictions

The Passing Glory of Judah's Daughters

perpetually renewed, and never more vividly renewed than in the midst of our misfortunes—a reliance commemorated in all the great ceremonies of our nation, in our worship, in our festivals, in every baptism, in every marriage—must have filled a large space in the susceptible mind of woman. And what but the mind forms the countenance? And what must have been the molding of that most magnificent and elevating of all hopes, for centuries, on the most plastic and expressive features in the world?

Sacredly reserved from intermixture with the blood of the stranger, the hope was spread throughout Israel. The line of David was pure, but its connection had shot widely through the land. It was like the Indian tree taking root through a thousand trees. Every Jewish woman might hope to be the living altar on which the Light to lighten the Gentiles was to descend! The humblest might be the blessed among women—the mother of the Messiah! But all is gone! Ages of wandering, wo, poverty, contumely, and mixture of blood have done their work of evil. The loveliness may partially remain, but the glory of Judah's daughters is no more.

CHAPTER VII

The Loss of a Life

A Wolf Chase among the Mountains

We continued ascending through the defiles of the mountain range of Carmel. The gorges of the hills gave us alternate glimpses of Lower Galilee, and of the great sea which lay bounding the western horizon with azure. The morning breezes from the land, now in the full vegetation of the rapid spring of Palestine, scarcely ceased to fill the heavens with fragrance, when the sea-wind sprang up and, with the coolness and purity of a gush of fountain-waters, renewed the spirit of life in the air and made the whole caravan forget its fatigue. Our bold hunters spurred down the valleys and up the hills with the wildness of superfluous vigor, tossed their lances into the air, sang their mountain songs, and shouted the cries of the chase and the battle.

On one eventful day a wolf was started from its covert, and every rein was let loose in a moment; nothing could stop the fearlessness of the riders or exhaust the fire of the steeds. The caravan, coming on slowly with the women and children and lengthening out among the passes, was forgotten. I scorned to be left behind, and followed my daring companions at full speed. The wolf led us a long chase; and on the summit of a rock, still blazing in the sunlight like a beacon, while the plain was growing dim, he fought his last fight, and, transfixed with a hundred lances, died the death of a hero. But the spot which we had reached supplied statelier contemplations: we were on the summit of Mount Tabor; the eye wandered over the whole glory of the Land of Promise. To the south extended the mountains of Samaria, their peaked summits glowing in the sun with the colored brilliancy of a chain of gems. To the east lay the lake of Tiberias, a long line of purple. Northward, like a thousand rainbows, ascended, lit

Salathiel's View from Mount Tabor

by the western flame, the mountains of Gilboa, those memorable hills on which the spear of Saul was broken, and the first curse of our obstinacy was branded upon us in the blood of our first king. Closing the superb circle, and soaring into the very heavens, ascended step by step the Antilibanus.

Of all the sights that nature offers to the eye and mind of man, mountains have always stirred my strongest feelings. I have seen the ocean when it was turned up from the bottom by tempest, and noon was like night with the conflict of the billows and the storm that tore and scattered them in mist and foam across the sky. I have seen the desert rise around me, and calmly, in the midst of thousands uttering cries of horror and paralyzed by fear, have contemplated the sandy pillars coming like the advance of some gigantic city of conflagration flying across the wilderness, every column glowing with intense fire and every blast with death; the sky vaulted with gloom, the earth a furnace. But with me, the mountain —in tempest or in calm, whether the throne of the thunder or with the evening sun painting its dells and declivities in colors dipped in heaven—has been the source of the most absorbing sensations: *there* stands magnitude, giving the instant impression of a power above man—grandeur that defies decay —antiquity that tells of ages unnumbered—beauty that the touch of time makes only more beautiful—use exhaustless for the service of man—strength imperishable as the globe; the monument of eternity—the truest earthly emblem of that ever-living, unchangeable, irresistible Majesty by whom and for whom all things were made!

I was gazing on the Antilibanus, and peopling its distant slopes with figures of other worlds ascending and descending, as in the patriarch's dream, when I was roused by the trampling steed of one of my kinsmen returning with the wolf's head, the trophy of his superior prowess, at his saddle-bow.

"So," said he, "you disdained to share the last battle of that dog of the Galilees? But we shall show you something better worth the chase when we reach home. The first snow that drives the lions down from Lebanon, or the first hot wind that sends the panthers flying before it from Assyria, will

have all our villages up in arms; every man who can draw a bow or throw a lance will be on the mountains; and then we shall give you the honors of a hunter in exchange for your philosophy." He uttered this with a jovial laugh, and a hand grasping mine with the grip of a giant. "Yet," said he, and a shade passed over his brow, "I wish we had something better to do; you must not look down upon Jubal, and the tribe of your brother Eleazar, as mere rovers after wolves and panthers." [10]

I willingly declared my respect for the intrepidity and dexterity which the mountain life insured. I applauded its health, activity, and cheerfulness. "Yet," interrupted Jubal sternly, "what can be done while those Romans are everywhere round us?" He stopped short, reined up his horse with a sudden force that made the animal spring from the ground, flung his lance high in air, caught it in the fall, and having thus relieved his indignation, returned to discuss with me the chances of a Roman war. "Look at those," said he, pointing to the horsemen who were now bounding across the declivities to rejoin the caravan; "their horses are flame, their bodies are iron, and their souls would be both if they had a leader." "Eleazar is brave," I replied. "Brave as his own lance," was the answer; "no warmer heart, wiser head, or firmer arm moves at this hour within the borders of the land. But he despairs." "He knows," said I, "the Roman power and the Jewish weakness."

"Both—both, too well!" was the reply. "But he forgets the power that is in the cause of a people fighting for their law and for their rights, in the midst of glorious remembrances, nay, in the hope of a help greater than that of the sword. Look at the tract beyond those linden-trees."

He pointed to a broken extent of ground, darkly distinguishable from the rest of the plain. "On that ground, to this moment wearing the look of a grave, was drawn up the host of Sisera; under that ground is its grave. By this stone," and he struck his lance on a rough pillar defaced by time, "stood Deborah the prophetess, prophesying against the thousands and tens of thousands of the heathen below. On

Jubal, the Jewish Warrior

this hill were drawn up the army of Barak, as a drop in the ocean compared with the infidel multitudes. They were the ancestors of the men whom you now see trooping before you; the men of Naphtali, with their brothers of Zebulun. On this spot they gathered their might like the storm of heaven. From this spot they poured down like its whirlwinds and lightnings upon the taunting enemy. God was their leader. They rushed upon the nine hundred scythed chariots, upon the mailed cavalry, upon the countless infantry. Of all, but one escaped from the plain of Jezreel, and that one only to perish in his flight by the degradation of a woman's hand!" He wheeled round his foaming horse, and appealed to me. "Are the Roman legions more numerous than that host of the dead? Is Israel now less valiant, less wronged, or less indignant? Shall no prophet arise among us again? Shall it not be sung again, as it was then sung to the harps of Israel: 'Zebulun and Naphtali were a people that jeoparded their lives unto the death in the high places of the field'?"

I looked with involuntary wonder at the change wrought in him by those proud recollections. The rude and jovial hunter was no more; the Jewish warrior stood before me, filled with the double impulse of generous scorn of the oppression and of high dependence on the fate of his nation. His countenance was ennobled, his form seemed to dilate, his voice grew sonorous as a trumpet. A sudden burst of the declining sun broke upon his figure, and threw a sheet of splendor across the scarlet turban, the glittering tunic, the spear-point lifted in the strenuous hand, the richly caparisoned front and sanguine nostrils of his impatient charger. A Gentile would have worshiped him as the tutelar genius of war. I saw in him but the man that our history and our law were ordained beyond all others to have made—the native strength of character raised into heroism by the conviction of a guiding and protecting Providence.

The conversation was not forgotten on either side; and it bore fruit, fearful fruit, in time.

We had reached on our return a commanding point, from which we looked into the depths already filling with twilight,

and through whose blue vapors the caravan toiled slowly along, like a wearied fleet in some billowy sea. Suddenly a tumult was perceived below; shouts of confusion and terror rose, and the whole caravan was seen scattering in all directions through the passes. For the first moment we thought that it had been attacked by the mountain robbers. We grasped our lances, and galloped down the side of the hill to charge them, when we were stopped at once by a cry from the ridge which we had just left. It struck through my heart —the voice was Miriam's. To my unspeakable horror, I saw her dromedary, mad with fear and pouring blood, rush along the edge of the precipice. I saw the figure clinging to his neck. The light forsook my eyes, and but for the grasp of Jubal, I must have fallen to the ground. His voice aroused me. When I looked round again, the shouts had died, the troop had disappeared—it seemed all a dream!

Salathiel's Plunge Down the Precipice

But, again, the shouts came doubling upon the wind, and far as the eye could pierce through the dusk, I saw the white robe of Miriam flying along like a vapor. I threw the reins on my horse's neck—I roused him with my voice—I rushed with the fearlessness of despair through the hills—I overtook the troop—I outstripped them—still the vision flew before me. At length it sank. The dromedary had plunged down the precipice, a depth of hideous darkness. A torrent roared below. I struck in the spur to follow. My horse wheeled round on the edge; while I strove to force him to the leap, my kinsmen came up, with Eleazar at their head. Bold as they were, they all recoiled from the frightful depth. Even in that wild moment I had time to feel that this was but the beginning of my inflictions, and that I was to be the ruin of all that belonged to me. In consciousness unspeakable, I sprang from my startled steed, and before a hand could check me I plunged in. A cry of astonishment and horror rang in my ears as I fell. The roar of waters was then around me. I struggled with the torrent, gasped, and heard no more.

This desperate effort saved the life of Miriam. We were found apparently dead, clasped in each other's arms, at some

The Spring of a Wolf

distance down the stream. The plunge had broken the band by which she was fixed on the saddle. She floated, and we were thrown together by the eddy. After long effort, we were restored. But the lamentations of my matchless wife were restrained beside my couch, only to burst forth when she was alone. We had lost our infant!

The chase of the wolves in the mountain had driven them across the march of the caravan. One of those savages sprang upon the flank of the dromedary. The animal, in the agony of its wounds, burst away; its proverbial fleetness baffled pursuit, and it was almost fortunate that it at length bounded over the precipice, as, in the mountain country, its precious burden must have perished by the lion or by famine. Miriam held her babe with the strong grasp of a mother, but in the torrent that grasp was dissolved. All our search was in vain. My wife wept; but I had in her rescued my chief treasure on earth, and was partially consoled by the same deep feeling which pronounced that I might have been punished by the loss of all.

CHAPTER VIII

Salathiel Confronts the Shade of Antiochus

Salathiel's Discontent

LET me hasten through some years.[11] The sunshine of life was gone; in all my desire to conform to the habits of my new career, I found myself incapable of contentment. But the times, that had long resembled the stagnation of a lake, were beginning to be shaken. Rome herself, the prey of conspiracy, gradually held her foreign scepter with a feebler hand. Gaul and Germany were covered with gathering clouds, and their flashes were answered from the Asiatic hills. With the relaxation of the paramount authority, the chain of subordinate oppression, as always happens, was made tighter. As the master was enfeebled, the menials were less in awe; and Judea rapidly felt what must be the evils of a military government without the strictness of military discipline.

I protest against being charged with ambition. But I had a painful sense of the guilt of suffering even such powers as I might possess to waste away, without use to some part of mankind. I was weary of the utter unproductiveness of the animal enjoyments, in which I saw the multitude round me content to linger into old age. I longed for an opportunity of contributing my mite to the solid possessions by which posterity is wiser, happier, or purer than the generation before it—some trivial tribute to that mighty stream of time which ought to go on, continually bringing richer fertility as it flowed. I was not grieved by the change which I saw overshadowing the gorgeous empire of Rome. My unspeakable crime may have thrown a deeper tinge on those contemplations. But by a singular fatality, and perhaps for the increase of my punishment, I was left for long periods in each year to the common impressions of life. The wisdom,

Painful recollections

which even my great misfortune might have forced upon me, was withheld; and the being who, in the conviction of his mysterious destiny, must have looked upon earth and its pursuits as man looks upon the labors and the life of flies—as atoms in the sunshine—as measureless emptiness and trifling—was given over to be disturbed by the impulses of generations on whose dust he was to sit, and to see other generations rise round him, themselves to sink alike into dust, while he still sat an image of endurance, torturing, but imperishable.

There was a season in each year when those recollections returned with overwhelming vividness. If all other knowledge of the approach of the Passover could have escaped me, there were signs, fearful signs, that warned me of that hour of my wo. A periodic dread of the sight of man, a sudden sense of my utter separation from the interests of the transitory beings around me, wild dreams, days of immovable abstraction, yet filled with the breathing picture of all that I had done on the day of my guilt in Jerusalem, rose before me with such intense reality that I lived again through the scene. The successive progress of my crime—the swift and stinging consciousness of condemnation—the flash of fearful knowledge, that showed me futurity—all were felt with the keenness of a being from whom his fleshly nature has been stripped away and the soul bared to every visitation of pain. I stood, like a disembodied spirit, in suffering.

Yet I could not be restrained from following my tribe on their annual progress to the Holy City. To see from afar the towers of the Temple was with me like a craving for life—but I never dared to set my foot within its gates. On some pretense or other, and sometimes through real powerlessness, arising from the conflict of my heart, I lingered behind, yet within the distance from which the city could be seen. There among the precipices I wandered through the day, listening to the various uproar of the mighty multitude, or wistfully catching some echo of the hymns in the Temple—sounds that stole from my eye many a tear—till darkness fell, the city slumbered, and the blast of the Roman trumpets, as they di-

vided the night, reminded me of the fallen glories of my country.

In one of those wanderings I had followed the courses of the Kedron, which, from a brook under the walls of Jerusalem, swells to a river on its descent to the Dead Sea. The blood of the sacrifices from the conduits of the altars curdled on its surface and stained the sands purple. It looked like a wounded vein from the mighty heart above. I still strayed on, wrapped in sad forebodings of the hour when its stains might be of more than sacrifice, until I found myself on the edge of the lake. Who has ever seen that black expanse without a shudder? There were the engulfed cities. Around it life was extinct—no animal bounded—no bird hovered. The distant rushing of the Jordan, as it forced its current through the heavy waters, or the sigh of the wind through the reeds, alone broke the silence of this mighty grave. Of the melancholy objects of nature, none is more depressing than a large expanse of stagnant waters. No gloom of forest or wildness of mountain is so overpowering as this dreary, unrelieved flatness—the marshy border, the sickly vegetation of the shore, the leaden color which even the sky above it wears, tinged by its sepulchral atmosphere. But the waters before me were not left to the dreams of a saddened fancy—they were a sepulcher. Myriads of human beings lay beneath them, entombed in sulfurous beds. The wrath of Heaven had been there! The day of destruction seemed to pass again before my eyes, as I lay gazing upon those sullen depths. I saw them once more a plain covered with richness; cities glittering in the morning sun; multitudes pouring out from their gates to sports and festivals; the land exulting with life and luxuriance: Then a cloud gathered above. I heard the thunder: it was answered by the earthquake. Fire burst from the skies: it was answered by a thousand founts of fire spouting from the plain. The distant hills blazed and threw volcanic showers over the cities. Round them was a tide of burning bitumen. The earthquake heaved again. All sank into the gulf. I heard the roar of the distant waters. They rushed into the bed of fire; the doom was done; the cities of

A Meeting

the plain were gone down to the blackness of darkness forever!

I was idly watching the bursts of suffocating vapor, that shoot up at intervals from the rising masses of bitumen, when I was startled by a wild laugh and wilder figure beside me. I sprang to my feet, and prepared for defense with my poniard. The figure waved its hand, in sign to sheathe the unnecessary weapon, and said, in a tone strange and melancholy: "You are in my power, but I do not come to injure you. I have been contemplating your countenance for some time; I have seen your disturbed features—your wringing hands—your convulsed form—are you even as I am?"

The voice was singularly mild; yet I never heard a sound that so keenly pierced my brain. The speaker was of the tallest stature of man—every sinew and muscle exhibiting gigantic strength; yet with the symmetry of a Greek statue. But his countenance was the true wonder—it was of the finest mold of manly beauty; the contour was Greek, though the hue was Syrian—yet the dark tinge of country gave way at times to a corpse-like paleness. I had full leisure for the view, for he stood gazing on me without a word and I remained fixed on my defense. At length he said: "Put up that poniard! You could no more hurt me than you could resist me. Look here!" He wrenched a huge mass of rock from the ground and whirled it far into the lake, as if it had been a pebble. I gazed with speechless astonishment. "Yes," pursued the figure, "they throw me into their prisons—they lash me—they stretch me on the rack—they burn my flesh." As he spoke he flung aside his robe and showed his broad breast covered with scars. "Short-sighted fools! little they know him who suffers or him who commands. If it were not my will to endure, I could crush my tormentors as I crush an insect. They chain me, too," said he with a laugh of scorn. He drew out the arm which had been hitherto wrapped in his robe. It was loaded with heavy links of iron. He grasped one of them in his hand, twisted it off with scarcely an effort, and flung it up a sightless distance in the air. "Such are bars and bolts to me! When my time is come to suffer, I

submit to be tortured! When that time is past, I tear away their fetters, burst their dungeons, and walk forth trampling their armed men." Salathiel Craves Po

I sheathed the dagger. "Does this strength amaze you?" said the being; "look to yonder dust"—and he pointed to a cloud of sand that came flying along the shore. "I could outstrip that whirlwind; I could plunge unhurt into the depths of that sea; I could ascend that mountain swifter than the eagle; I could ride that thunder-cloud."

As he threw himself back, gazing upon the sky with his grand form buoyant with vigor and his arm raised, he looked like one to whom height or depth could offer no obstacle. His mantle flew out along the blast, like the unfurling of a mighty wing. There was something in his look and voice that gave irresistible conviction to his words. Conscious mastery was in all about him. I should not have felt surprise to see him spring up into the clouds!

My mind grew inflamed by his presence. My blood burned with sensations for which language was no name—a thirst of power—a scorn of earth—a proud and fiery longing for the command of the hidden mysteries of nature. I felt as the great ancestor of mankind might have felt when the tempter told him, "Ye shall be even as gods."

"Give me your power!" I exclaimed; "the world to me is worthless; with man all my ties are broken; let me live in the desert, and be even as you are; give me your power." "My power?" he repeated, with a ghastly laugh that was echoed round the wilderness by what seemed voices innumerable until it died away in a distant groan. "Look on this forehead!"—he threw back the corner of his mantle. A furrow was drawn round his brow, covered with gore, and gaping like a fresh wound. "Here," cried he, "sat the diadem. I was Epiphanes." [12]

"You, Antiochus! the tyrant—the persecutor—the spoiler—the accursed of Israel!" I bounded backward in sudden horror. I saw before me one of those spirits of the evil dead who are allowed from time to time to reappear on earth in the body, whether of the dead or the living. For some

Which Antiochus promises

cause that none could unfold, Judea had been, within the last few years, haunted by those beings more than for centuries. Strange rites, dangerously borrowed from the idolaters, were resorted to for our relief from this new terror: the pulling of the mandrake at the eclipse of the moon—incantations—midnight offerings—the root of Baaras, that was said to flash flame and kill the animal that drew it from the ground. Our Sadducees and skeptics, wise in their own conceit, declared that possession was but a human disease, a wilder insanity. But, with the range and misery of madness, there were tremendous distinctions, which raised it beyond all the ravages of the hurt mind or the afflicted frame—the look, the language, the horror, of the possessed were above man. They defied human restraint; they lived in wildernesses where the very serpents died; the fiery sun of the East, the inclemency of the fiercest winter, had no power to break down their strength. But they had stronger signs. They spoke of things to which the wisdom of the wisest was folly; they told of the remotest future, with the force of prophecy; they gave glimpses of a knowledge brought from realms of being inaccessible to living man; last and loftiest sign, they did homage to His coming, whom a cloud of darkness, the guilty and impenetrable darkness of the heart, had veiled from my unhappy nation. But their worship was terror—they believed and trembled.

"Power," said the possessed, and his large and unmoving eyes seemed lighting up with fire from within; "power you shall have, and hate it; wealth you shall have, and hate it; life you shall have, and hate it; yet you shall know the heights and depths of man. You shall be the worm among a nation of worms; you shall be steeped in ruin to the lips; you shall undergo the bitterness of death, until——" His brow writhed; he gnashed his teeth, and convulsively sprang from the ground, as if an arrow had shot through him.

The current of his thoughts suddenly changed. Things above man were not to be uttered to the ear unopened by the grave. "Come," said he, "son of misfortune, emblem of the nation that living shall die, and dying shall live; that, trampled by all, shall trample upon all; that, bleeding from a

thousand wounds, shall be unhurt; that, beggared, shall wield the wealth of nations; that, without a name, shall sway the councils of kings; that, without a city, shall inhabit in all kingdoms; that, scattered like the dust, shall be bound together like the rock; that, perishing by the sword, by the chain, by famine, by fire, shall yet be imperishable, unnumbered, glorious as the stars of heaven." Salatbiel Overpowered

Overwhelmed with sensations, rushing in a flood through my heart, I had cast myself upon the ground; the flashing of the fiery eye before me consumed my blood; and, fainting, I lay with my face upon the sand. But his words were deeply heard; with every sound of his searching voice they struck into my soul. He grasped me; and I was lifted up like an infant in his clutch. "Come," said he, "and see what is reserved for you and for your people."

He darted forward with a speed that took away my breath; he ran—he bounded—he flew. "Now, behold," he uttered in an accent as composed as if he had not moved a limb. I looked, and found myself on one of the hills close to the great southern gate of Jerusalem. Years had passed since I ventured so nigh. But I now gazed on the city of pomp and beauty with an involuntary wonder that I could have ever deserted a scene so lovely and so loved.

It was the twilight of a summer evening. Tower and wall lay bathed in a sea of purple; the Temple rose from its center like an island of light; the host of heaven came riding up the blue fields above; the sounds of day died in harmony. All was the sweetness, calmness, and splendor of a vision painted in the clouds.

"There," said the possessed, "I was once master, conqueror, avenger; yet I was but the instrument to punish your furious dissensions—your guilty abandonment of the law of your leader—your more than Gentile apostasy from the worship of Him who is to be worshiped with more than the blood of bulls and goats. A power hidden from my idolatrous eyes went before me and broke down the courage of your people. I marched through your gates on the neck of the godless warrior; I plundered the wealth of your rich men,

A Prophecy of the Future

made worldly by their wealth; I slew your priesthood, already the betrayers of their altar; I overthrew your places of worship, already defiled; I covered the ruins with the blood of swine; I raised idols in the sanctuary; I bore away the golden vessels of the Temple, and gave them to the insult of the Syrian; I slew your males, I made captives of your women; I abolished your sacrifices, and pronounced in my hour of blasphemy that within the walls of Jerusalem the flame should never again be kindled to the Supreme. The deed was mine, but the cause was the iniquity of your people."

The history of devastation roused in me those feelings native to the Jew by which I had been taught to look with abhorrence on the devastator.

"Let me be gone," I exclaimed, struggling from his grasp. "Strange and terrible being, let me hear no more this outrage on God and man. I am guilty, too guilty, in having listened to you for a moment."

He laid his hand upon my brow, and I felt my strength dissolve at the touch.

"Go," said he, "but first be a witness of the future. A fiercer destroyer than Epiphanes shall come, to punish a darker crime than ever stained your forefathers. A destruction shall come to which the past was the sport of children. Tower and wall, citadel and temple, shall be dust. The sword shall do its work—the chain shall do its work—the flame shall do its work. Bad spirits shall rejoice; good spirits shall weep; Israel shall be clothed in sackcloth and ashes for a time, impenetrable by a created eye. The world shall exult, trample, scorn, and slay. Blindness, madness, and misery shall be the portion of the people. Now, behold!"

He stood, with his arm stretched out toward the Temple. All before me was tranquillity itself; night had suddenly fallen deeper than usual; the stars had been wrapped in clouds, that yet gathered without a wind; a faint tinge of light from the summit of Mount Moriah, the gleam of the never-extinguished altar of the daily sacrifice, alone marked the central court of the Temple. I turned from the almost deathlike stillness of the scene, with a look of involuntary

disbelief, to the face of my fearful guide; even in the deep darkness every feature of it was strangely visible. The Beginning of Evil

A low murmur from the city caught my ear; it rapidly grew loud, various, wild; it was soon intermingled with the clash of arms. Trumpets now rang; I recognized the charging shout of the Romans; I heard the tumultuous roar of my countrymen in return. The darkness was converted into light; torches blazed along the battlements; the Tower of Antonia, the Roman citadel, with its massy bulwarks and immense altitude, rose from a tossing expanse of flame below like a colossal funeral-pile; I could see on its summit the alarm, the rapid signals, the hasty snatching up of spear and shield, the confusion of the garrison which that night's vengeance was to offer up on the pile. The roar of battle rose, it deepened into cries of agony, it swelled again into furious exultation——

I thought of my countrymen butchered by some new caprice of power; of my kinsmen, perhaps at that instant involved in the massacre; of the city, every stone and beam of which was dear to my embittered heart, given up to the vengeance of the idolater! The prediction of its ruin was in my ears, and I longed to perish with my tribe. I panted with every shout of the battle; every new sheet of flame that rolled upward from the burning houses fevered me; I longed to rush into the uproar with the speed of the whirlwind. But the terrible hand was still upon my forehead, and I was feeble as a broken reed. "Behold," said the possessed, "those are but the beginnings of evil." I felt a sudden return of my strength; I looked up; he was gone!

CHAPTER IX

The Romans Driven from the Holy City

A Scene of Desolation

I PLUNGED into the valley, and found it filled with fugitives, incapable from terror of giving me any account of the conflict. Women and children, hastily thrown on the mules and camels, continued to pour through the country. The road wound through hills, and tho sometimes approaching near enough to the walls to be illuminated by the blaze of the torches and beacons, yet, from its general darkness and intricacy, I was left to make my way by the sounds of the struggle. But I was quickly within reach of ample evidence of what was doing in that night of havoc. The bend of the road, from which the first view of the grand portico was seen, had been the rallying-point for the multitude driven out by the unexpected resistance of the garrison. The tide of fight had thence ebbed and flowed, and I found the spot covered with the dead and dying. In my haste, I fell over one of the wounded; he groaned and prayed me for a cup of water. I knew the voice of Jairus, one of the boldest of our mountaineers, and bore him to the hillside that he might not be trampled by the crowd. He thanked me, and said: "If you be a man of Israel, fly to Eleazar. Take this spear—another moment may be too late." I seized the spear and sprang forward.

The multitude had repelled the Romans and forced them up the broad central street of the city. But a reenforcement from the Tower of Antonia had joined the troops, and were driving back the victors with ruinous disorder. I heard the war-cries of the tribes as they called to the rescue, and the charge, "Onward, Judah!" "Ho, for Zebulun!" "Glory to Naphtali!" I thought of the times of Jewish triumph, and saw

before me the warriors of the Maccabees. Nerved with new sensations, the strong instincts which make the war-horse paw the ground at the trumpet and make men rush headlong upon death, heightened by the stinging recollections of our days of freedom, I forced my path through the multitude that tossed and whirled like the eddies of the ocean. I found my kinsmen in front, battling desperately against the long spears of a Roman column, that, solid as iron, and favored by the higher ground, was pressing down all before it. The resistance was heroic, but unavailing; and when I burst forward, I found at my side nothing but faces dark with despair or covered with wounds. In front was a wall of shields and helmets, glaring in the light of the conflagration that was now rapidly spreading on all sides. The air was scorching, the smoke rolling against us in huge volumes; burning and loss of blood were consuming the multitude. But what is in the strength of the soldier or the bravery of discipline to daunt the desperate energy of men fighting for their country —and, above all men, of the Israelite, fighting in sight of the profaned Temple? The native frame, exercised by the habits of our temperate and agricultural life, was one of surpassing muscular strength; and man for man thrown naked into the field, we could have torn the Roman garrison into fragments for the fowls of the air. But their arms, and the help which they received from the nature of the ground, were too strong for the assault of men fighting with no shield but their cloaks and no arms but a pilgrim's staff or some weapon caught up from a dead enemy. Salathiel Wounded

Yet on me there came a wild impression that this night was to make or unmake me; an undefined feeling that in the shedding of my blood in sight of the Temple there might be some palliative, some washing away of my crime. I sprang forward between the combatants and defied the boldest of the legionaries; the battle paused for an instant, and my name was shouted in exultation by ten thousand voices. A shower of lances from the battlements was instantly poured upon me. I felt myself wounded, but the feeling only roused me to bolder daring. Tearing off my gory mantle, I lifted it on the

The Death of a Roman Tribune

point of my javelin, and, with the poniard in my right hand, devoted the Romans to ruin in the name of the Temple.

The enemy, in their native superstition, shrank from a being who looked the messenger of angry Heaven. The naked figure, the blood streaming from my wounds, the wild and mystic sound of my words, might have reminded them of the diviners who had often terrorized their souls in their own land. I burst into the circle of their spears, waving my standard and calling on my nation to follow. I smote to the right and left. The entrance that I had made in the iron bulwark was instantly filled by the multitude. All discipline now gave way. The weight of the Roman armor was ruinous to men grappled hand to hand by the light and sinewy agility of the Jew. We rushed on, trampling down cuirass and buckler, till we drove the enemy like sheep before us to the first gate of the Tower of Antonia. Arrows, lances, stones, in showers from the battlements, then could not stop the valor of the people. We rushed on to assault the gate. Sabinus, the tribune of the legion, rallied the remnant of the fugitives, and under cover of the battlements made a last attempt to change the fortunes of the night. Exhausted as I was, bruised and bleeding, my feet and hands lacerated with the burning ruins, my tongue cleaving to my mouth with deadly thirst, I rushed upon him. He had been known to the Jews as a tyrant and plunderer for the many years of his command. No trophy of the battle could have been so cheering to them as his head. But he had the bravery of his country, and it was now augmented by rage. The despair of being able to clear himself before imperial jealousy for that night's disasters must have made life worthless to him. He bounded on the drawbridge at my cry. Our meeting was brief; my poniard broke on his cuirass; his falchion descended with a blow that would have cloven a headpiece of steel. I sprang aside and caught it on the shaft of my javelin standard, which it cut clear in two. I returned the blow with the fragment. The iron pierced his throat; he flung up his hands, staggered back, and dropped dead. The roar of Israel rent the heavens!

Scarcely more alive than the trunk at my feet, I fell back

among the throng. But whatever may be the envy of courts, no injustice is done in the field. The successful leader is sure of his reward from the gallant spirits that he has conducted to victory. I was hailed with shouts—I was lifted on the shoulders of the multitude; the men of Naphtali proudly claimed me for their own, and when I clasped the hand of my brave friend Jubal, whom I found in the foremost rank, covered with dust and blood, he exclaimed: "Remember Barak; remember Mount Tabor!"

Eleazar a Prisoner

I looked round in vain for one with whom I had parted but a few days before, and without whom I scarcely dared to meet Miriam. Her noble brother was not to be seen. Had he fallen? Jubal understood my countenance, and mournfully pointed to the citadel, which rose above us, frowning down on our impotent rage.

"Eleazar is a prisoner?" I asked.

"There can be no hope for him from the hypocritical clemency of those barbarians of Italy," was the answer; "it was with him that the insurrection began. Some new Roman insolence had commanded that our people should offer a sacrifice to the image of the emperor—to the polluted, bloodthirsty tyrant of Rome and mankind. Eleazar shrank from this act of horror. The tribune, that dog of Rome, whose tongue you have silenced—so may perish all the enemies of the Holy City!—commanded that our chieftain should be scourged at the altar. The cords were round his arms; the spearmen were at his back; they marched him through the streets calling on all the Jews to look upon the punishment that was equally reserved for all. Our indignation burst forth in groans and prayers. I hastily gathered the males of our tribe; we snatched up what arms we could, and were rushing to his rescue when we saw him sweeping the guard before him. He had broken his bands by a desperate effort. We fell upon the pursuers. Blood was now drawn, and we knew the vengeance of the Romans. To break up and scatter through the country would have been only to give our throats to their cavalry. Eleazar determined to anticipate the attack. Messengers were sent round to the leaders of the

The Moment of Execution

tribes, and the seizure of the Roman fortress was resolved on. We gathered at nightfall and drove in the outposts. But the garrison was now roused. We were beaten down by a storm of darts and javelins, and must have been undone but for your appearance. In the first onset, Eleazar, while cheering us to the charge, was struck by a stone from an engine. I saw him fall among a circle of the enemy, and hastened to his rescue, but when I reached the spot he was gone, and my last sight of him was at yonder gate, as he was borne in, waving his hand—his last farewell to Naphtali."

Deep silence followed his broken accents; he hung his head on his hand, and the tears glistened through his fingers. The circle of brave men round us wrapped their heads in their mantles. I could not contain the bitterness of my soul. Years had cemented my friendship for the virtuous and generous-hearted brother of my beloved. He had borne with my waywardness—he had done all that man could do to soften my heart, to enlighten my darkness, to awaken me to a wisdom surpassing rubies. I lifted up my voice and wept. The brazen blast of a trumpet from the battlements suddenly raised all our eyes. Troops moved slowly along the walls of the fortress; they ascended the central tower. Their ranks opened, and in the midst was seen by the torch-light a man of Israel. They had brought him to that place of exposure, in the double cruelty of increasing his torture and ours by death in the presence of the people. A universal groan burst from below. He felt it, and meekly pointed with his hand to that Heaven where no tortures shall disturb the peace of the departed. The startling sound of the trumpet stung the ear again—it was the signal for execution. I saw the archer advance to take aim at him. He drew the shaft. Almost unconsciously I seized a sling from the hands of one of our tribe. I whirled it. The archer dropped dead, with the arrow still on his bow.

To those who had not seen the cause, the effect was almost a miracle. The air pealed with acclamation; a thousand slings instantly swept the escort from the battlements; the walls were left naked—ladders were raised—ropes were slung

—axes were brandished; the activity of our hunters and mountaineers availed itself of every crevice and projection of the walls; they climbed on each other's shoulders; they leaped from point to point, where the antelope could have scarcely found footing; they ran over narrow and fenced walls and curtains, where, in open daylight and with his senses awake to the danger, no man could have moved. Torches without number now showered upon all that was combustible. At length, the central tower took fire. We fought no longer in darkness; the flames rolled sheet on sheet above our heads, throwing light over the whole horizon. We were soon in no want of help; the tribes poured in at the sight of the conflagration, and no valor could resist their enthusiasm. Some cried out that they saw beings mightier than man descending to fight the battle of the favored nation; some that the day of Joshua had returned, and that a light of more than earthly luster was visible in the burning! But the battle was no longer doubtful. The Romans, reduced in number by the struggle in the streets, exhausted by the last attack, and aware, from the destruction of their magazines, that their most successful resistance must be ended by famine, called out for terms. I had but one answer—"The life of Eleazar." [18] The drawbridge fell and he appeared—the next moment he was in my arms!

The Rescue of Eleazar

The garrison marched out. I restrained the violence of their conquerors, irritated by the memory of years of insult. Not a hair of a Roman head was touched. They were led down to the valley of Kedron, where they were disarmed, and thence sent without delay under a safeguard to their countrymen in Idumea. In one night the Holy City was cleared of every foot of the idolater.

A vast Assemblage

many who without regard for the hope of freedom or the holiness of our cause, look upon the crisis only as a means of personal aggrandizement. And lastly, we are not without our traitors, who confound all opinions and who are making work for Roman gold and iron. Your voice will decide. Speak at once, and speak our mind; your kinsmen will support it with their lives."

The council was held in the amphitheater of the palace. The heads of families and principal men of the people had crowded into it until the council, instead of the privacy of a few chieftains, assumed the look of a great popular assembly. Tens of thousands had forced themselves into the seats; every bosom responding to every accent of the orator, a mighty instrument vibrating through all its strings to the master's hand. Accustomed as I was, by the festivals of our nation, to the sight of great bodies of men swayed by a common impulse, I stopped in astonishment at the entrance of the colossal circle. Three-fourths of it was almost totally dark, giving a shadowy intimation of human beings by the light of a few scattered torches, or the feeble dawn that rounded the extreme height with a ring of pale and moon-like rays. But in the center of the arena a fire blazed, and showed the leaders of the deliberation seated in the splendid chairs once assigned to the Roman governors and legionary tribunes. Eleazar filled the temporary throne.

The chief man of the land of Ephraim was haranguing the assembly as I entered. "Go to war with Rome!" " pronounced he; "you might as well go to war with the ocean, for her power is as wide; you might as well fight the storm, for her vengeance is as rapid; you might as well call up the armies of Judea against the pestilence, for her sword is as sweeping, as sudden, and as sure. Who but madmen would go to war without allies? and where are yours to be looked for? Rome is the mistress of all nations. Would you make a war of fortresses? Rome has in her possession all your walled towns. Every tower from Dan to Beersheba has a Roman banner on its battlements. Would you meet her in the plain? Where are your horsemen? The Roman cavalry

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The archer dropped dead, with the arrow still on his bow.

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would be upon you before you could draw your swords, and would trample you into the sand. Would you make the campaign in the mountains? The Roman generals would disdain to waste a drop of blood upon you; they would only have to block up the passes and leave famine to do the rest. Harvest is not come, and if it were, you dare not descend to the plains to gather it. You are told to rely upon the strength of the country. Have the fiery sands of the desert, or the marshes of Germany, or the snows of Scythia, or the stormy waters of Britain defended *them?* Does Egypt, within your sight, give you no example? A land of inexhaustible fertility, crowded with seven millions of men passionately devoted to their country, opulent, brave, and sustained by the countless millions of Africa, with a country defended on both flanks by the wilderness, in the rear inaccessible to the Roman, exposing the narrowest and most defensible front of any nation on earth; yet Egypt, in spite of the Libyan valor and the Greek genius, is garrisoned at this hour by a single Roman legion! The Roman bird grasping the thunder in its talons, and touching with one wing the sunrise and with the other the sunset, throws its shadow over the world. Shall we call it to stoop upon us? Must we spread for it the new banquet of the blood of Israel?"

How different is the power of speech upon men sitting in the common, peaceful circumstances of public assemblage, from its tyranny over minds anxious about their own fates! All that I had ever seen of public excitement was stone and ice to the burning interest that hung upon every word of the orator. The name of Onias was famous in Judea, but I now saw him for the first time. His had been a life of ambition, compassed often by desperate means, and wo be to the man who stood between him and his object. By the dagger and by subserviency to the Roman procurators he had risen to the highest rank below the throne. In the distractions of a time which broke off the regular succession of the sons of Aaron, Onias had even been High Priest; but Eleazar, heading the popular indignation, had expelled him from the Temple after one month of troubled supremacy. I could read his history

The Influence of Onias

in the haughty figure and daring yet wily visage that stood in bold relief before the central flame. But to the assemblage his declamation had infinite power; they listened as to the words of life and death; they had come, not to delight their ears with showy periods, but to hear what they must do to escape that inexorable fury which might within a few days or hours be let loose upon every individual head. All was alternately the deepest silence and the most tumultuous agitation. At his strong appeals they writhed their athletic forms, they gnashed their teeth, they tore their hair; some crouched to the ground with their faces buried in their hands, as if shutting out the coming horrors; some started upright, brandishing their rude weapons and tossing their naked limbs in gestures of defiance; some sat bending down and throwing back their long locks, that not a syllable might escape; others knelt, with their quivering hands clasped and their pallid countenances turned up in agony of prayer. Many had been wounded, and their foreheads and limbs, hastily bound up, were still stained with gore. Turbans and robes, rent and discolored with dust and burning, were on every side, and the whole immense multitude bore the look of men who had but just struggled out of some great calamity to find themselves on the verge of one still more irremediable.

The orator found that his impression was made, and he hastened to the close. For this he reserved the sting. "If it be the desire of those who seek the downfall of Judah that we should go to war, let it be the first wisdom of those who seek its safety to disappoint, to defy, and to denounce them." The words were followed by a visible movement among the hearers. "Let an embassy be instantly sent to the proconsul," said he, "lamenting the excesses of the night and offering hostages for peace." The silence grew breathless; the orator, wrapped in his robe, and bending his head, like a tiger crouching, waited for the work of the passions; then suddenly starting up and fixing his stormy gaze full on Eleazar, thundered out: "And at the head of those hostages, let the incendiary who caused this night's havoc be sent, and sent in chains!"

The words were received with fierce applause by the assemblage, and crowds rushed into the arena to enforce them by the seizure of Eleazar. I glanced at him; his life hung by a hair, but not a feature of his noble countenance was disturbed. I sprang upon the pavement at the foot of the throne; every moment was precious; the multitude were raging with the fury of wild beasts. My voice was at length heard; the name of Salathiel had become powerful, and the tumult partially subsided. My words were few, but they came from the heart. I asked them, was it to be thought of that they should deliver up men of their own nation, of their purest blood, the last scions of the noblest families of Israel, into the hands of the idolater! And for what crime? For an act which every true Israelite would glory to have done: for rescuing the altar of the living God from pollution. I bade them beware of dipping their hands in righteous blood, for the gratification of a revenge that had for twenty years poisoned the breast of a hoary traitor to his priesthood and his country. There was a dead silence. I continued:

Salathiel Turns the Tide

"We are threatened with the irresistible power of Rome. Are we to forget that Rome is at this moment torn with internal miseries, her provinces in revolt, her senate decimated, her citizens turned into a mass of jailers and prisoners, and, darkest sign of degradation, that Nero is upon her throne?" The multitude began to be moved.

"Whom," said I, "have we conquered this night? A Roman garrison. Where have we conquered them? In the midst of their walls and machines. By whom was the conquest achieved? By the unarmed, undisciplined, unguided men of Israel. The shepherd and the tiller of the ground, with but the staff and sling, smote the cuirassed Roman, as the son of Jesse smote the Philistine!"

The native bravery of the people lived again, and they shouted, in the language of the Temple: "Glory to the King of Israel! Glory to the God of David!"

Onias saw the tide turning, and started from his seat to address the assembly; but he was overpowered with outcries of anger. Furious at the loss of his fame and his revenge, he

The Declaration of War

rushed through the arena toward the spot where I stood. Jubal, ever gallant and watchful, bounded to my side, and seizing the traitor's hand in the act of unsheathing a dagger, wrested the weapon from him, and was ready to plunge it in his heart at a sign from me. Eleazar's sonorous voice was then first heard. "Let no violence be done upon that slave of his passions. No Jewish blood must stain our holy cause. Return, Onias, to your tribe, and give the rest of your days to repentance." Jubal cast the baffled homicide from his grasp far into the crowd.

The universal echo now was "war!" "Ruin to the idolater. War for the Temple." "War," I exclaimed, "is wisdom, honor, security. Let us bow our necks again, and we shall be rewarded by the ax. The Romans never forgive until the brave man who resists is either a slave or a corpse; the work of this night has put us beyond pardon, and our only hope is in arms, the appeal to that sovereign justice before which nothing is strong but virtue, truth, and patriotism. War is inevitable."

My words, few as they were, rekindled the chilled ardor of the national heart. They were followed by shouts for instant battle. "War against the world! liberty to Israel!" Some voices began a hymn; the habits of the people prepared them for this powerful mode of expressing their sympathies. The whole assembly spontaneously stood up and joined in the hymn. The magnificent invocation of David, "Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered," ascended in solemn harmonies on the wings of the morning. It was heard over the awaking city, and answered; the chant of glory spread to the encampments on the surrounding hills, and in every pause we heard the responses rolling on the air in rich thunder.

CHAPTER XI

The Strength of Judea

The Spirit of War

THE result of our deliberation was that Israel should be summoned to make a last grand effort; that Jerusalem should be left with a strong garrison, as the center of the armies; and that every chieftain should set forth to stir up the energies of his people.

Eleazar and his kinsmen were instantly upon the road to the mountains, and all was haste and that mixture of anxiety and animation which makes all other life tasteless and colorless to the warrior. With what new vividness did the coming conflict invest the varied and romantic country through which we had already journeyed so often! The hill, the ravine, the superb sweep of forest that we once looked on with but the vague indulgence of the picturesque eye, now filled us with the vision of camps and battles. Hunters of the lion, we had felt something of this interest in tracing the ground where we were to combat the kingly savage. But what were the triumphs of the chase to the mighty chances of that struggle in which a kingdom was to be the field and the Roman glory the prey!

Man is belligerent by nature, and the thought of war summons up sensations and even faculties within him that in the common course of life would have been no more discoverable than the bottom of the sea; the moral earthquake must come to open the heart for all men to gaze upon. Even Eleazar's calm and grave wisdom felt the spirit of the time, and he reasoned on the probabilities of the struggle with the lofty ardor of a king preparing to win a new throne. Jubal's sanguine temper was unrestrainable; he was the war-horse in the sight of the banners; his bronzed cheek glowed with hope and exultation. He saw in every cloud of dust a Roman

Salathiel Reflects

squadron, and grasped his lance and wheeled his foaming charger with the eager joy of a soldier longing to assuage his thirst for battle.

The weight on my melancholy mind was beyond the power of chance or time to remove, but a new strength was in the crisis. The world to me was covered with clouds eternal, but it was now brightened by a wild and keen luster; I saw my way by the lightning. An irresistible conviction still told me that the last day of Israel was approaching, and that no sacrifice of valor or victory could avert the ruin. In the midst of the loudest exhilaration of the fearless hearts around me, the picture of the coming ruin would grow upon my eyes." I saw my generous friends perish one by one; my household desolate; every name that I ever loved passed away. When I bent my eyes round the horizon luxuriating in the golden sunshine of the east, I saw but a huge altar, covered with the fatal offerings of a slaughtered people.

And this was seen, not with the misty uncertainty of a mind prone to dreams of evil, but with a clearness of foresight, a distinct and defined reality, that left no room for conjecture. Yet—and here was the bitterest part of my meditation—what was all this ruin to me? What were those men and women and households and lands but as the leaves on the wind to me! I might strive in the last extremities of their struggle. I might undergo the agonies of death with them a thousand times; and I inwardly pledged myself never to desert their cause while through pain or sorrow I could cling to it; but this devotion, however protracted, must have an end. I must see the final hour of them all, and more unhappy, more destitute, more undone than all, I must be deprived of the consolation of making my tomb with the righteous and laying my weary heart in the slumbers of their grave! Still, I experienced more than the keenest fervor of the impulse which was now burning around me. With me it was not kingly care, nor the animal ardency of the soldier. It was the high stimulation of something like the infusion of a new principle of existence. I felt as if I had become the vehicle of a descended spirit. A ceaseless current of thought

ran through my brain. Old knowledge that I had utterly forgotten revived in me with spontaneous freshness. Casual impressions and long past years arose, with their stamps and marks as clear as if a hoard of medals had been suddenly brought to light and thrown before me. I ran over in my recollection persons and names with painful accuracy. The conceptions of those for whom I once felt habitual deference were now seen by me in their nakedness. All that was habitual was passed away; I saw intuitively the vanity and giddiness, the inconsequential reasoning, the bewildering prejudice, that made up what in other days I had called the wisdom of the wise.

As I threw out in the most unpremeditated language the ideas thus glowing and struggling for escape, I found that the impression of some extraordinary excitement in me was universal. Accustomed to be heard with the attention due to my rank, I now saw the eyes of my fellow travelers turned on me with an evident and deferential surprise. When I talked of the hopes of the country, of the resources of the enemy, of the kingdoms that would be ready to make common cause with us against the galling tyranny of Nero, of the glory of fighting for our altars, and of the imperishable honors of those whose blood earned peace for their children, they listened as to something more than man. "Was I the prophet delegated at last to lead Judea to her glory?"

At those discourses, bursting from my lips with unconscious fire, the old men would vow the remnant of their days to the field; the young would sweep over the country performing the evolutions of the Roman cavalry, then return brandishing their weapons and demanding to be let loose on the first cohort that crossed the horizon. With me every pulse now was war. The interest which this new direction of our minds gave to all things grew more intense. I spurred to the barren heath; it had now no deformity, for upon it I saw the spot from which battle might be offered to an army advancing through the valley below. The marsh that spread its yellow stagnation over the plain might be worth a province for the protection of my camp. The thicket, the broken bank of the torrent,

The Land of Judea

the bluff promontory, the rock, the sand, every repellent feature of the landscape was invested with the value of a thing of life and death, a portion of the great stake in the game that was so soon to be played for restoration or ruin.

Those are the delights of soldiership, the indescribable and brilliant colorings which the sense of danger, the desire for fame, and the hope of triumph throw over life and nature. Yet, if war was ever to be forgiven for its cause, to be justified by the high remembrances and desperate injuries of a people, or to be encouraged by the physical strength of a country, it was this, the final war of Israel. In all my wanderings I have seen no kingdom, for defense, equal to Judea.[16] It had in the highest degree the three grand essentials, compactness of territory, density of population, and strength of frontier. If I were at this hour to be sent forth to select from the earth a kingdom, I should say, even extinguishing the recollections of my being and the love which I bear to the very weeds of my country—for beauty, for climate, for natural wealth, and for invincible security, give me Judea!

The Land of Promise had been chosen by the Supreme Wisdom for the inheritance of a people destined to be unconquerable while they continued pure. It was surrounded on all sides but one by mountains and deserts, and that one was defended by the sea, which at the same time opened to it the intercourse with the richest countries of the west. On the north, opposed to the vast population of Asia Minor, it was protected by the double range of the Libanus and Antilibanus, a region of forests and defiles at all seasons almost impassable to chariots and cavalry, and during winter barred up with torrents and snows. The whole frontier to the east and south was a wall of mountain rising from a desert—a durable barrier over which no enemy, exhausted by the privations of an Asiatic march, could force their way against a brave army waiting fresh within its own confines. But even if the Syrian wastes of sand and the fiery soil of Arabia left the invaders strength to master the mountain defenses, the whole interior was full of the finest positions for defense that ever caught the soldier's eye.

All the mountains sent branches through the champaign. The ---
As we spurred up the sides of Carmel, we saw an horizon tions ---
covered with cloud-like hills Every city was built on an eminence and capable of being instantly converted into a fortress. But while an army kept the field, the larger operations of strategy would have found matchless support in the course of the Jordan, the second defense of Judea; a line passing through the whole central country from north to south, with the lake of Tiberias and the lake Asphaltites at either extreme, at once defending and supplying the movements in front, flank, and rear.

The territory thus defensible had an additional and superior strength in the character and habits of its population. In a space of two hundred miles long by a hundred broad, its inhabitants once amounted to nearly four millions, tillers of the soil, bold tribes, invigorated by their life of industry and connected with one another by the most intimate and frequent intercourse, under the divine command. By the law of Moses —may he rest in glory!—every man from twenty to sixty was liable to be called on for the general defense; and the customary armament of the tribes was appointed at six hundred thousand men!

The munitions of war were in abundance. All the varieties of troops known in the ancient armies were to be found in Judea, in the highest discipline; from the spearsman to the archer and the slinger, from the heavy-armed soldier of the fortress to the ranger of the desert and the mountain. Cavalry was prohibited, for the great purpose of the Jewish armament was defense. The spirit of the Jewish code was peace. By the prohibition of cavalry, no conquests could be made on the bordering kingdoms of interminable plains. The command that the males of the tribes should go up thrice in the year to the great festivals of Jerusalem was equally opposed to the encroachments on the neighboring states. It was not until Israel had abandoned the purity of the original covenant with Heaven that the evils of ambition or tyranny were felt within her borders.

Israel's whole policy was under a divine sanction, and her

The Effect of Determined Resistance

whole preservation was distinguished by the perpetual agency of miracle, for the obvious purpose of compelling the people to know the God of their fathers. But the physical strength of such a people in such a territory was incalculable. Severity of climate will not ultimately repel an invader, for that severity scatters and exhausts the native population. Difficulties of country have always been overcome by a daring invader in the attack of a feeble or negligent people. To what nation were their snows, their marshes, or their sands a barrier against the great armies of the ancient or the modern world? The Alps and the Pyrenees have been passed as often as they have been attempted. But no empire can conquer a nation of millions of men determined to resist; no army that could be thrown across the frontier would find the means of penetrating through a compact population, of which every man was a soldier and every soldier was fighting for his own.

The Jew was, by his law, a free proprietor of the soil.[17] He was no serf, no broken vassal. He inherited his portion of the land by an irrevocable title. Debt, misfortune, or time could not extinguish his right. Capable of being alienated from him for a few years, the land was returned to him at the Jubilee. He was then once more a possessor, the master of a competence, and restored to his rank amongst his fellow men. This bond, the most benevolent and the strongest that ever bound man to a country, was the bond of the Covenant. If Israel had held the institutions of her lawgiver inviolate, she would have seen the Assyrian, the Egyptian, and the Roman, with all their multitudes, only food for the vulture. But we were a rebellious people; we sullied the purity of the Mosaic ordinances; we abandoned the sublime ceremonial of divine worship for the profligate rites of paganism; we rejected the Lord of the theocracy for the pomps of an earthly king. Then the mighty protection that had been to us as an eagle's wings and as a wall of fire was withdrawn. Our first punishment was by our own hand; the union of Israel was a band of flax in the flame. The tribes revolted. The time was come for the hostile idolater to do his work. We were overwhelmed

by enemies in alliance with our own blood. The banners of Jacob were seen waving beside the banners of Ashtaroth and Apis. An opening was made into the bosom of the land for all invasion; the barriers of the mountain and the desert were in vain; the proverbial bravery of the Jew only rendered his chain more severe; and the policy that of old united the highest wisdom with the most benevolent mercy became at once the scoff and problem of the pagan world. The Land Invasion

But opulence, salubrity, and luxuriance of production belonged to the site of the land of Israel. It lay central between the richest regions of the world. It was the natural road of the traffic of India with the west; that traffic which raised Tyre and Sidon from rocks and shallows on a fragment of the shore of Judea into magnificent cities, and which was yet to raise into political power and unrivaled wealth the rocks and shallows of the remotest shore of the Mediterranean. Our mountain ranges tempered the hot winds from the wilderness. The sea cooled the summer heats with the living breeze, and tempered the chill of winter. Our fields teemed with perpetual fruits and flowers.

The extent of the land, tho narrow, when contrasted with the surrounding kingdoms, was yet not to be measured by its lineal boundaries;[18] a country intersected everywhere by chains of hills capable of cultivation to the summit, alike multiplies its surface and varies its climate. We had at the foot of the hill the products of the torrid zone; on its side those of the temperate; on its summit the robust vegetation of the north. The ascending circles of the orange-grove, the vineyard, and the forest covered it with perpetual beauty.

This scene of matchless productiveness is fair and fertile no more. For ages before my eyes opened on the land of my fathers the national misfortunes had impaired its original loveliness. The schism of the tribes, the ravages of successive invaders, and still more, the continued presence of the idolater and the alien in the heart of the land, turned large portions of it into desert. The final fall almost destroyed the traces of its fruitfulness. What can be demanded from the soil lorded

What might have been

over by the tyranny of the Moslem, stripped of its population, and given up to the mendicant, the monk, and the robber?

But more than human evil smote my unhappy country. The curse pronounced by our great prophet three thousand years ago has been deeply fulfilled. "The stranger that shall come from a far land shall say, when he beholdeth the plagues of the land, and the sickness that the Lord hath laid upon it, the land of brimstone and salt and burning, even all nations shall say, Wherefore hath the Lord done this unto this land? What meaneth the heat of this great anger? Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers!"

The soil has been blasted. Sterility has struck into its heart. Whole provinces are covered with sands and ashes. It has the look of an exhausted volcano.

Yet, what might have been the progress of this people! The glory of Israel is no fine vision of the fancy. The same prophetic word which has given terrible demonstration of its reality in our ruin declares the hope once held forth to our obedience. Judea was to have borne the first rank among nations; to have been an object of universal honor; to have been unconquerable; to have enjoyed unwearied fertility; to have been protected from the casualties of the elements; to have been free from disease, the life of its people continuing to the farthest limit of our nature. A blessing was to be upon the labors, the possessions, and the persons of the tribes; all Israel a holy nation in the highest sense of the word—a sovereign race to which the world should pay a willing and happy homage.

What must have been the operation of this illustrious instance of the preservative power of Heaven on the darkened empires; of the scriptural lights perpetually beaming from Judea; of the living, palpable happiness and obedience to the Supreme; of the perpetual security of the land in the divine protection; of the internal peace, health, plenteousness, and freedom? Man is weak and passionate, but no blindness could have hid from his contemplations this proof of the human value of virtue.

We must add to this the direct influence of a governing people, placed in its rank for the express purpose of a guide to nations. Combining the knowledge and devotedness of a priesthood with the actual power and dignity of kings; by its own constitution as safe from all encroachments as prohibited from all aggression; informed by the immediate wisdom and sustained by the visible arm of Omnipotence, Judea might have changed the earth into a paradise, and raised universal man to the highest happiness, knowledge, and grandeur of human nature!

CHAPTER XII

The Prince of Naphtali Confronts Desolation

: Choice of a Leader

WAR was now inevitable. Attempts had been made by our rulers to propitiate the Roman emperor, but their answer was the march of a legion to Jerusalem. The seizure of some of the people who had made themselves conspicuous in the late capture of the citadel followed, and an order was despatched to the governor of Galilee for the execution of Eleazar. His tribe instantly assembled and all voices were for resistance. My noble kinsman, still pacific, offered himself as the victim. But this generous sacrifice we all denounced, and called for war. The appointment of a leader was next debated in a hurried assemblage, to which every head of a village came in arms. No man could contest the command with Eleazar. But he declined it from a sense of his inexperience in war in a few simple words.

Then, suddenly bursting into ardor, he exclaimed: "Our war is holy! It is not to be hazarded on the claims of hereditary rank, personal freedom, or even on national favoritism. The only claims which the nation must acknowledge in its extremity are the rights of tried talent, experienced intrepidity, and unquestionable service. Such a leader stands among us at this moment." Every eye was turned upon *me*. "Yes," exclaimed my noble kinsman, "you have already made your choice. Genius, valor, and success have combined to mark one man for the leader of Israel. He is worthy of the diadem." Then turning to me and lifting his hand, as if he was letting fall the diadem upon my head, "Go forth," cried he in a tone of almost prophetic grandeur, "Go forth, prince of Naphtali, leader of Israel, to break the chains of Judah and conquer in the cause of man and Heaven!" The words were received with acclamation.

I vainly protested against the general voice, that I was a priest of the Temple of the house of Aaron, of the tribe of Levi, and bound to Naphtali only by ties of kindred and gratitude. I was answered by a multitude of voices that my summons was actually in the service of the Temple; that war extinguished all office but that of defending the country; that I had long retired from the duties of the priesthood; that Moses was at once the priest and the leader; that Samuel was at once the prophet and the sovereign of Israel; above all, that I had shown myself, by daring and success, almost superior to man, the Heaven-elected leader of Israel. Salathiel comes a

I acknowledged that my heart was with the answerers, and I at length gave way to what even I believed to be the will of more than man. A thousand falchions, wielded by as sinewy hands as ever drew sword, were instantly moved round my head. I was placed on a shield, and in this ancient fashion of our countrymen I was inaugurated prince of Naphtali. This was one of the blinding flashes that broke in from time to time on my gloomy career. When the assemblage dispersed and I returned toward my mountain home, I was still in the excitement of the scene. I even began to imagine that my terrible sentence was about to be lightened, perhaps to pass away; my station in life was now fixed; services of the highest rank in the noblest cause were before me, and I felt myself exclaiming, even to the solitude, "I am prince of Naphtali!" [19] My exultation was soon to have a fall.

It was the evening of one of the freshest days of the loveliest season of earth, the spring of Palestine. All nature was clothed with its robe of genial beauty; the olives on the higher grounds had put forth their first green, and with every slight gust that swept across them heaved like sheets of emerald; the birds sang in a thousand notes from every bush; the sheep and camels lay in the meadows visibly enjoying the sweet air; the shepherds sat gathered together on the side of some gentle eminence, talking, or listening to the songs of the maidens who came in long lines to the fountains below. The heavens gave prospect of a glorious day in the colors shown only to the Oriental eyes; hues so brilliant that many a traveler

stops on the verge of the valleys arrested, in his haste homeward, by the pomp above. All was the loveliness and joy of pastoral life, in the only country where I ever found it realized. The mind is to be medicined by natural loveliness, and mine was doubly cheered. To return to our home is at all times a delight; but the new conjuncture, the high hopes of the future, and the consciousness that a career of the most distinguished honors might be opening before my steps, made this return more vivid than all the past; and when we reached the foot of the long ascent from which my dwelling was visible I felt an impatience beyond restraint, and spurred up the hill with my tidings. How fine the ear becomes when quickened by the heart! As the mountain road, now more difficult by the darkness of the wild pines and cedars that crowned the summit, compelled me to slacken my pace, I thought that I could distinguish the household voices, the barking of my hounds, and the laugh of the retainers and peasantry that during the summer crowded my doors.

I pictured the dearer group that had so often welcomed me. The early and cruel loss of my son had not been repaired. I was not destined to be the father of a race; but two daughters were given to me, and in the absence of all ambition, they were more than a recompense. Salome, the elder, was now approaching womanhood; she had the dark eyes and animated beauty of her mother; the foot of the antelope was not lighter; and her wreathed smile, her laugh of innocence, and her buoyancy of soul forbade sorrow in her sight. How changed I afterward saw that face of living joy! What floods of sorrow bathed those cheeks, that once shamed the Persian rose!

The younger was scarcely more than a child; her mind and her form were yet equally in the bud, but she had an eye of the deepest azure, a living star; and even in her playfulness there was an elevation, a lofty and fervent spirit, that made me often forget her years. She was mistress of music almost by nature, and the cadences and rich modulations that poured from her harp, under fingers slight and feeble, as if the stalks of flowers had been flung across the strings, were like secrets

of harmony treasured for her touch alone. Our prophets, the true masters of the sublime, were her rapturous study. Their truths might yet be veiled, but their genius blazed broad upon her sensitive soul.

I pictured my children hastening through the portal, hand in hand with their noble mother, still in the prime of matronly beauty, to give me welcome. The light thickened, and the intricacy of the forest impeded me. At length, wearied by the delay, I sprang from my horse, left him to make his way as best he could, and pushed forward through a thicket which crept round the skirts of the forest. As I struggled onward, listening with sharpened anxiety for every sound of home, I heard a noise like that of a wild beast rustling close at my side. The thicket was now dark. My eyes were useless. I drew my simitar, and plunged it straight before me. The blow was instantly followed by a shriek. Friend or enemy, silence was now impossible, and I demanded who was nigh. I was answered but by groans; my next step was on a human body. Shocked and startled, I lifted it in my arms and bore the dying man to an open space where the moonlight glimmered. To my unspeakable horror, he was one of my most favored attendants, whom I had left in the principal charge of my household; I had slain him. I tore up my mantle to stanch his wound, but he fiercely repelled my hand. In an undefined dread of some evil to my family, I commanded him to speak, if but one word, and tell me that all was safe. He buried his face in his mantle.

In the whirlwind of my thoughts I flung him from me, that I might go forward and know the good or evil; but he clung round my feet, and exerted his last breath to implore me not to leave him to die alone.

"You have killed me," said he, in broken accents; "but it was only the hand of the Avenger. I was corrupted by gold. You have terrible enemies among the leaders of Jerusalem; a desperate deed has been done."

My suspense amounted to agony; I made another effort to cast off the trammels of the assassin, but he still implored.

"Evil things were whispered against you. I was told that

Salathiel finds Ruin

you had been convicted of a horrible crime." The sound shot through my senses; he must have felt the trembling of my frame, for he for the first time looked upon my face.

"My sight is gone," groaned he, and fell back. I dared not meet the glance even of his clouding eyes. "They said that you were condemned to an unspeakable punishment and that the man who swept the world of you and yours did God service. In my hour of sin the tempter met me, and this day from sunrise have I lurked on your road to strike my benefactor and my lord. In the dark I lost my way in the thicket; but vengeance found me."

"My wife, my children, are they safe?" I exclaimed.

He quivered, relaxed his hold, and uttering "Forgive!" two or three times, with nervous agony, expired.

A single bound from this spot of death placed me on a point of rock from which I had often gazed on my little world in the valley. The moon was now bright and the view unobstructed. I looked down. Were my eyes dim? There was no habitation beneath me; the grove, the garden, were there, sleeping in the moonlight; but all that had the semblance of life was gone! I rushed down and found myself among ruins and ashes still hot. I called aloud—in terror and distraction, I yelled to the night, but no voice answered me. My foot struck upon something in the grass; it was a sword dyed with recent blood. There had been burning, plunder, slaughter here in this treasure-house of my heart; desolation had been busy in the center of what was to me life—more than life. I raved; I flew through the fields; I rushed back, to convince myself that I was not in some frightful dream. What I endured that night I never endured again; that conflict of fear, astonishment, love, and misery could be contained but once even in my bosom; in all others it must have been death. In the moment of reviving hope I had been smitten. While my spirit was ascending on the wings of justified ambition and sacred love of country, I had been dashed down to earth, a desolate and a desperate man.

What I did thenceforth, or how I passed through that night, I know not; but I was found in the morning with my robe

fantastically thrown over me like a royal mantle, and a fragment of half-burned wood for a scepter in my hand, performing the part of a monarch, giving orders for the rebuilding of my palace, and marshaling the movements of an army of shrubs and weeds. I was led away with the lofty reluctance of a captive sovereign, to the household of Eleazar. A fruitless search

The wrath and grief of my kinsmen were without bounds. Every defile of the mountains was searched—every straggler seized; messengers were despatched across the frontier with offers of ransom to the chiefs of the desert, in case my family should have escaped the sword. Threats of severe retaliation were used by the Roman governor of the province; all was in vain. The only intelligence was from a shepherd, who, two nights before, had seen a troop which he supposed to be Arabs, ride swiftly by the gates of Kuriathim, our nearest city; but this intelligence only added to the misfortune. The habits of those robbers were proverbially savage; they lived by the torch and the sword; they slaughtered the men without mercy; the females they generally sold into endless captivity. To leave no trace of their route, they slaughtered the captives whom they could not carry through their hurried marches. To leave no trace of what they had done, they burned the place of massacre. But this ruin was from other and more malignant hands!

CHAPTER XIII

The Wandering of a Mind Diseased

The Tyranny of Imagination

WHAT I might have suffered in the agony of a bereaved husband and father was spared me. My visitation was of another kind; dreadful, yet perhaps not so preeminently wretched, nor so deeply striking at the roots of life. My brain had received an overwhelming blow." Imagination was to be my tyrant; and every occurrence of life, every aspect of humanity, every variety of nature, day and night, sunshine and storm, made a portion of its fearful empire. What is insanity but a more vivid and terrible dream? It has the dream-like tumult of events, the rapidity of transit, the quick invention, the utter disregard of place and time. The difference lies in its intensity. The madman is awake; and the open eye administers a horrid reality to the fantastic vision. The vigor of the senses gives a living and resistless strength to the vagueness of the fancy; it compels together the fleeting mists of the mind, and embodies them into shapes of deadly power.

I was mad! but all my madness was not painful. Books, my old delight, still lulled my mind. I turned the pages of some volume; then fancy waved her wand, and built upon its contents a world of adventure. Every language appeared to open treasures to me. I roved through all lands; I saw all those eminent in rank or genius; I drank of the fountains of poetry; I addressed listening senates, and heard the air echo with applause. Wit, beauty, talent, laid their inestimable tributes at my feet. I was exalted to the highest triumphs of mind; and then came my fate. In the midst of my glory came a cloud, and I was miserable. This bitter sense of defeat was a characteristic of my visions. Be the cup ever so sweet, it had a poison drop at bottom.

The history of my country was most frequent on my mind. I imagined myself the great King of Babylon. From the superb architecture of those palaces, in which Nebuchadnezzar forgot that he was but a man, I issued my mandates to a hundred monarchs. I saw the satraps of the East bow their jeweled necks before my throne. I rode at the head of countless armies, lord of Asia, and prospective conqueror of all the realms that saw the sun. In the swellings of my haughty soul I exclaimed, like him, "Is not this the great Babylon that I have built?" and like him, in the very uttering of the words I was cast out, humbled to the grass of the field, hideous, brutal, and wretched. . . .

I was Belshazzar. I sat in the halls of glory. I heard the harps of minstrels, the voices of singing men and women. The banquet was before me; I was surrounded by the trophies of irresistible conquest. Beauty, flattery, splendor, the delight of the senses, the keener feast of vanity, the rich anticipation of triumph measureless and endless, made me all but a god. I put the profaned cup of the Temple to my lips. Thunder pealed; the serene sky, the only canopy worthy of my banquet and my throne, was sheeted over with lightning. I swallowed the wine—it was poison and fire in my veins. The gigantic hand came forth and wrote upon the wall. . . .

The moon, that ancient mistress of the diseased mind, strongly exerted her spells on mine. I loved her light, but it was only when it mingled softly with the shadows of the forest and the landscape. I welcomed her return from darkness as the coming of some guardian genius to shed at once beauty and healing on its path. Darkness was to me a source of terror; daylight overwhelmed me, but the gentle splendor of the crescent had a dewy and refreshing influence on my faculties. I exposed my feverish forehead to her beams, as if to bathe it in celestial balm. I felt in her gradual increase, an increase of power to soothe and console. This indulgence grew into a kind of visionary passion. I saw in the crescent, as it sailed up the ether, a galley crowded with forms of surpassing loveliness, faces that bent down and smiled upon me,

The Hours of Terror

and hands that showered treasures, to be collected by mine alone. But excess even of her light always disturbed me. From the full splendor of the moon there was no escape; the rays smote upon me with merciless infliction; I fled to the woods as a hunted deer; a thousand shafts of light penetrated the shade. I hid myself in the depths of my chamber; flames of lambent silver, curling and darting in forms innumerable, shot round my couch. Upon the inequalities of the ground, or the waves of the fountain and the river, serpents of the most inimitable luster, yet of the most deadly poison, coiled and sprang after me with a rapidity that mocked human feet. If I dared to glance upward, I beheld a menacing visage distending to an immeasurable magnitude, and ready to pour down wrath; or an orb with its mountains and oceans swinging loose through the heaven and rolling down upon my solitary brow.

But those were my hours of comparative happiness. I had visions of unspeakable terror; flights through regions of space, that left earth and the sun incalculable millions of miles behind; flights ceaseless, hopeless—still hurrying onward with more than winged speed through infinite worlds, and still enduring; the heart sickening and withering with a consciousness of being swept beyond the bounds of living things, and of being doomed to this forever.

Those trials changed into every shape of desperation.

. . . I was driven out to sea in a bark that let in every wave. I struggled to reach the land; I tore my sinews with toil; I saw the trees, the shore, the hills, sink in slow, yet sure succession; I felt in the hands of an invisible power, bent on my undoing. The storm subsided, the sun shone, the ocean was without a surge. Still I struggled; with the strength of despair I toiled to regain the land—to retard the viewless force that was perpetually urging me further from existence. I began to suffer thirst and hunger. They grew to pain, to torture, to madness. I felt as if molten lead were poured down my throat. I put my arm to my mouth, and shuddering, quenched my thirst in my own veins. It returned instantly with a more fiery sting. There was nothing in the elements to give me

hope—to draw off thought from my own fate—to deaden the venomed sensibilities that quivered through every fiber. The wind slept; the sky was cloudless; the sea smooth as glass; not a distant sail, not a wandering bird, not a springing fish, not even a floating weed, broke the terrible monotony. The sun did not pass down the horizon. All above me was unvaried, motionless sky; all around me, unvaried, motionless ocean. I alone moved—still urged further from the chance of life; still undergoing new accessions of agony that made the past trivial. I tasted the water beside me; it added fire to fire. I convulsively darted out my withered hands, as if they could have drawn down the rain or grasped the dew. I withered piecemeal, yet with a continuing consciousness in every fragment of my frame!

The Increase of Gloom

My visitation changed. . . . I wandered at midnight through a country of mountains. Worn out with fatigue, I lay down upon a rock. I found it heave under me. I heard a thunder-peal. A sudden blaze kindled the sky. Bewildered and stunned, I started to my feet. The mountains were on flame; a hundred mouths poured down torrents of liquid fire; they came shooting in sulfurous cataracts down the chasms. The forests burned before them like a garment—the rocks melted—the rivers flew up in sheets of vapor—the valleys were basins of glowing ore—the clouds of smoke and ashes gathered over my head in a solid vault of gloom, sullenly illuminated by the conflagration below—the land was a cavern of fire. In terror inconceivable, I ran, I bounded, I plunged down declivities, I swam rivers; still the fiery torrents hunted my steps as if they had been commissioned against me alone. I felt them gathering speed on me; when I bounded, the spot from which I sprang was on flame before I alighted on the ground. I climbed a promontory with an effort that exhausted my last nerve. The fatal lava swept round its foot and in another instant must encircle me. I ran along the edge of a precipice that made the brain turn; the fire chased me from pinnacle to pinnacle. I clung to the weeds and trunks of trees on its sides, and, in fear of being dashed to pieces, tremblingly let myself down the wall of perpendicular rock.

Changes of the Imagination

Breathless and dying at the bottom of the descent, I glanced upward; the flame of the thicket on the brow showed me my pursuer. I saw the rapid swelling of the molten tide. In another moment it plunged through the air in a white column; the valley was instantly an expanse of conflagration—every spot was inundated with the blaze. I flew, with scorching feet, with every sinew of my frame parched and dried of its substance—with my eyes blinded and my lungs burned up by the suffocating fumes that rushed before, around, and above me.

At length my limit was reached. The land afforded no further room for flight. I stood on the verge of the ocean. Death was inevitable. I had but the choice. Before me spread the world of waters, sad, dim, fathomless, interminable; behind me, the world of flame. By a last desperate effort, I plunged into the ocean. The indefatigable lava rolled on, mass on mass, like armies rushing to the assault. The billows shrank before the fiery shock, sheets of vapor rolled up; still the eruption rolled on, and the returning billows fought against it. The conflict shook the land; the mountain shore crumbled down; the sands melted and burned vitreous; the atmosphere discharged scalding torrents; the winds, shaken from their balance, raged with the violence of more than tempest. Thunder roared in peals that shook the earth, the ocean, and the heavens. In the midst of all I lived, tossed like a grain of sand in the whirlwind.

Strange and harassing as those trials of my mind were, they had yet contained some appeals to individual energy, some excitement of personal powers, that produced a kind, of cheering self-applause. I was Prometheus on his rock chained and remediless, yet still resisting and unconquered. But the real misery was when I was passive.

. . . I strayed through an Egyptian city. Buildings numberless, of the most regal designs, rose round me; the walls were covered with sculptures of extraordinary richness; noble statues lined the public ways; wealth in the wildest profusion was visible wherever the foot trod. Endless ranges of porphyry and alabaster columns glittered in the noonday sun.

Superb ascents of marble steps mounted before me, to heights that strained the eye. Arch over arch studded with the luster of precious stones climbed until they lay like rainbows upon the sky. Colossal towers circling with successive colonnades of dazzling brightness, ascended—airy citadels, looking down upon earth, and colored with the infinite dyes and lusters of the clouds. But all was silence in this scene of pomp. There was no tread of human being heard within the circuit of a city, fit for more than man. The utter extinction of all that gives the idea of life was startling; there was not the note of a passing bird, nor the chirp of a grasshopper. I instinctively shrank from the sight of things lovely in themselves, yet which froze my mind by their image of the tomb. But to escape was impossible; there was an impression of powerlessness upon me, for whose melancholy I can find no words. My feet were chainless, but never fetter clung with such a retarding weight as that invisible bond by which I was fixed to the spot. Ages on ages seemed to have heavily sunk away, and still I stood, bound by the same manacle, standing on the same spot, looking on the same objects. To this I would have preferred the fiercest extremes of suffering. Of all passions that dwell within the heart of man, the passion for change is the most incapable of being extinguished or eluded.

In the Twilight

But a change at length came. The sun sank. Twilight fell, shade on shade, on tower and column until total darkness shrouded the scene of glory. Yet, as if a new faculty of sight were given to me, the thickest darkness did not blunt the eye. I still saw all things—the minutest figures of the architecture, the finest carving of the airy castles, whose height was, even in the sunshine, almost too remote for vision. Suddenly there echoed the murmur of many voices, the tramping of many feet; the colossal gates opened and a procession of forms innumerable entered; they were of every period of life, of every pursuit, of every rank, of every country. All the various emblems of station, all the weapons and implements of mankind, all costumes, rich and strange, civilized and savage; all the attributes and adjuncts of the occupations of so-

A Spectral Procession

ciety were in that mighty train. The monarch, sceptered and crowned, passed on his throne; the soldier reining in his charger; the philosopher gazing on his volume; the priest bearing the instruments of sacrifice. It was the triumph of a power ruling all mankind; but ruling them when their world has passed away—DEATH.

While I gazed in breathless awe, I found myself involved in the procession. Resistance was in vain. I was conscious that I might as well have struggled against the tides of the ocean, or thought to stop the revolution of the globe. We advanced through the place of darkness by millions of millions, yet without crowding the majestic avenue or reaching its close. I rapidly recognized a multitude of faces which I had known from the models and memorials of the past ages. But the power that marshaled them had no regard for time. The pale, fixed Asiatic countenance of Ninus moved beside the glowing cheek and flashing eye of Alexander. The patriarch followed the Cæsar. The thousand years were as one day, the one day as a thousand years.

Again the whole stately train suddenly melted before the eye, and I was alone, in tenfold darkness—entombed. I lay in the sepulcher, but with the full vividness of life, and with a perfect knowledge that there it was my doom to lie forever. A miraculous foresight gave me the fearful privilege of looking into the most remote futurity. Ages on ages unfolded themselves, with all their wonders, to tantalize me. I saw worlds awake from chaos and return to it in flood and flame. I saw systems swept away like the sand. The universe withered with years, and rolled up like the parchment scroll. I saw new regions of space, glowing with a new creation; the angelic hierarchies rising through new energies, new triumphs, new orders of existence; developments of power and magnificence, of sublime mercy and essential glory, too high for the conception of mortal faculties. Yet I was still to be entombed! No ray of light, no sound, no trace of external being, no sympathy of flesh or spirit, of earth or heaven was to reach me. The four narrow walls, the winding-sheet, the worm, were my world! I seemed to lie thus, for periods beyond all counting;

powerless to move a limb; the sleepless, conscious, vivid victim of misery unspeakable—the bondsman of the sepulcher! A Vivid Imagination

In those wanderings, I experienced not even the slightest recollection of the cause which had so sternly shaken my brain; wife, children, country, were a blank. Imagination, that strangest and most imperious of our faculties, whose soarings from earth to heaven may be among the indications of power beyond the grave, disdains to linger on the realities of our being. It delights in the commanding, the bold, the superb. In my instance it had the wildness of disease; but who has ever felt its workings, even in the dream of health, without wonder at its passion for the richer and more highly relieved remembrances; its singular skill in throwing together the loftier portions of life and nature, to the total disregard of the level; its subtlety in the seizure of the circumstances of pain, its fabrication of adventure, at once of the most regular consecutiveness, and the wildest originality; and all characterized by the same spontaneous swiftness of change and illimitable command over space and time, a power of instant flight from continent to continent, and from world to world—the transit that would actually fill up years and ages the work of a moment!—the actual moment expanding into years and ages!

What are those but the infant attributes of the disembodied spirit!—the imperfect developments of a state of being to which time and space are as nothing—when man, shaking off the covering of the grave, shall be clothed with the might of angels!—the splendid denizen of Infinitude and Eternity!

CHAPTER XIV

The Fury of a Tempest

Selathiel Further Wanders

At length the past returned to my mind. Dim recollections, shadows that alternately advanced and eluded me, sketches of forms and events, like pictures unfinished by the pencil, lay before me, colorless and undefined. But day by day the outlines grew more complete, the figures assumed a body, they lived—they moved—they uttered sounds; and while to other eyes I was a solitary and hopeless fugitive from human converse, to my own I was surrounded by a circle of all that I loved, yet with a continued sense of privation, a mysterious feeling of something imperfect in the indulgence that dashed my cup with bitterness.

With the increase of my strength, I became a wanderer to great distances among the mountains. No persuasion of my kinsmen could restrain me from those excursions. The mildness of a climate in which the population sleep in the open air, and the abundance of fruits, met the two chief difficulties of traveling. I felt an irresistible impulse to penetrate the mountain ranges that rose in chains of purple and azure before me. With the artifice of the diseased mind, I made my few preparations in secret, and with but scrip and staff, marched forth to tread hill and valley, city and desert, were it to the last limit of the globe.

Through what diversities of scene or impediments of road I passed no recollection remains with me. The same instinct which guides the bird led me to the fruit-tree and the stream, taught me where to shelter for the night, and gave me sagacity enough for the avoidance of the habitual dangers of a route seldom tried but by the wolf and the robber.

My frame, gradually invigorated by exercise, bore me through all, and I scaled the chain of Libanus with an un-

wearied foot. There I reached the skirts of a region where the snow scarcely melts, even in the burning summer of Syria. The falling of the leaf and the furious blasts that burst through the ravines told me that I had spent months in my pilgrimage, and that I must brave winter on its throne. Still I persevered. I felt a new excitement in the new difficulty of the season; I longed to try my power of endurance against the storm, to wrestle with the whirlwind, to baffle the torrent. The very sight of the snow, as it began to sheet the sides of the lower hills, gave me a vague idea of a brighter realm of existence; it united the pinnacles with the clouds; the noble promontories and forest-covered eminences no longer rose in stern contrast with the sky; they were dipped in celestial blue; they wore the silvery and sparkling luster of the morning skies; they blushed in the effulgence of the sunset, with as rich a crimson as the cloud that crowned them.

In Sight of the Groves of Lebanon

But all was not fantastic vision. From the summit of one of those hills I saw what was then worth a pilgrimage through half the world to see, the cedar grove of Lebanon.[21] After a day of unusual fatigue and perplexity, I had found my path blocked up by a perpendicular pile of rock. To all but myself the difficulty might have been impracticable; but my habits had given me the spring and sinew of a panther; I bounded against the marble, and after long effort, by the help of weeds and scattered roots of the wild vines, climbed my perilous way to the summit. An endless range of Syria lay beneath; the sea and the wilderness gleamed on my left and right; and a rich succession of dells, crowded with the date, the olive. and the grape, in their autumnal dyes, spread out before me, as far as the eye could reach, in a land whose air is pure as crystal.

A sound of trumpets and wild harmonies arose, and I discovered, at an almost viewless depth below, a concourse of people moving through the hollows of the mountains. The tendency of man to man is irresistible; and that unexpected sight, where but the wild beast and the eagle were to have been my companions, gave me the first sensation of pleasure that I had long experienced. Bounding from rock to rock

On Scriptural Ground

with a hazardous rapidity which arrested the crowd in astonishment and alarm, I joined them, just in time to see the shafts and slings laid down, which they had prepared for my coming, in the uncertainty whether I were a wolf or the leader of a troop of mountain robbers!

They formed one of the many caravans which annually gathered from the shores of the Mediterranean to worship at Lebanon. Their homage to sacred groves had been transmitted from the earliest antiquity, and was universal in the realms of paganism. To the Jew, worship on the hill and under the tree was prohibited; but the forest that Solomon had chosen, the trees of which the first Temple was built, the foliage which shaded the first planters of the earth, must to the descendant of Abraham be full of reverent interest. The ground was Scriptural; the fiery string of the prophet Ezekiel had been struck in its praise; the noblest raptures of our poets celebrated the glory of Lebanon; the names of the surrounding landscape recalled lofty and lovely memories; the vale of EDEN led to the mountain of the Cedars!

To my fellow-travelers, traditions tinged by the fervid coloring of the Oriental fancy heightened the native power of the spot. On the summits of the trees were said to descend at appointed times those ministering spirits whose purpose is to rectify the ways of man. There stooped on the wing the bearers of the sword against the evil monarchs; there brooded the angel of the tempest; there the invisible ruler of the pestilence blew with his breath and nations sickened; there, in night and in the interval of storms, was heard the trumpet that, before kings dreamed of quarrel, announced the collision of guilty empires for their common ruin. The violation of the grove was supposed to be visited with the most inexorable calamity; the hand that cut down a tree for any ordinary use withered from the body; all misfortunes fell upon the man; his wealth disappeared, his children died in their prime; if life was suffered to linger in himself, it was only to perpetuate the warning of his punishment. Yet, there were gentler distinctions mingled with those stern attributes. Above the hill was the pagan entrance to the skies. Once in the year,

the celestial gate rolled back on its golden hinges to sounds surpassing mortal music; the heavens dropped balm; the prayer offered on that night reached at once the supreme throne; the tear was treasured in the volume of light, and the worshiper who died before the envious coming of the morn ascended to a felicity, earned by others only through the tardy trial of the grave! Even the river, which ran round the mountain's foot, bore its share of virtue; its water, unpolluted by the decays of autumn or the turbidness of winter, showed the preservative power of a superior spell; it was entitled the Holy Stream, and sealed vessels of its water were sent even to India and Italy as presents of health and sanctity to kings, gifts worthy of kings.

A Caravan Worship

When we entered the last defile, the minstrels and singers of the caravan commenced a pæan. Altars fumed from various points of the chasm above and the Syrian priests were seen in their robes performing the empty rites of idolatry. I turned away from this perversion of human reason, and pressed forward through the lingering multitude until the forest rose in its majesty before me.

My step was now checked in solemn admiration. I saw the earliest products of the earth—the patriarchs of the vegetable world. The first generation of the reviving globe had sat beneath these green and lovely arches; the final generation was to sit beneath them. No roof so noble ever rose above the heads of monarchs, tho it were covered with gold and diamonds! The forest had been greatly impaired in its extent and beauty by the sacrilegious hand of war. The perpetual conflicts of the Syrian and Egyptian dynasties had laid the ax to it with remorseless violation. It once spread over the whole range of the mountains; its diminished strength now, like the relics of a mighty army, made its stand among the central fortresses of its native region; and there majestically bade defiance to the further assault of steel and fire. The forms of the trees seemed made for duration; the trunks were of prodigious thickness, smooth and round as pillars of marble; some rising to a great height, and throwing out a vast level roof of foliage; some dividing into a cluster of trunks, and

with their various heights of branch and leaf making a succession of verdurous caves; some propagating themselves by circles of young cedars, risen where the fruit had dropped upon the ground; the whole bearing the aspect of a colossal temple of nature—the shafted column, the deep arch, the solid buttresses, branching off into the richest caprices of Oriental architecture, the solemn roof, high above, pale, yet painted by the strong sunlight through the leaves with transparent and tesselated dyes, various as the colors of the Indian loom.

In the momentary feeling of awe and of wonder, I could comprehend why paganism loved to worship under the shade of forests and why the poets of paganism filled that shade with the presence of deities. The airy whisperings, the deep loneliness, the rich twilight, were the very food of mystery. Even the forms that towered before the eye, those ancient trees, the survivors of the general law of mortality, gigantic, hoary, covered with their weedy robes, bowing their aged heads in the blast, and uttering strange sounds and groanings in the struggle, gave to the high-wrought superstition of the time the images of things unearthly; the oracle, and the God! Or, was this impression but the obscure revival of one of those lovely truths that shone upon the days of Paradise when man drew knowledge from its fount in nature, and all but his own passions were disclosed to the first-born of creation?

The caravan encamped in the depth of the valley, and the grove was soon crowded with worshipers, in whose homage I could take no share. Fires were lighted on the large stones, which had for ages served the purpose of altars; and the names of the Syrian idols were shouted and sung in the fierce exultation of a worship but slightly purified from its original barbarism. As the night fell, I withdrew to the entrance of the defile and gave a last glance at Lebanon. In the grove, filled with fires, and echoing with wild music and dances of riot, I saw the emblem of my fallen country; the holiness, old as the memory of nations, profaned; yet the existence preserved, and still to be preserved; Israel, once throned upon its mountains, now diminished of its beauty, to be yet more

diminished, but to live when all else perished; to be restored, and to cover its native hills again with glory. I buried my face in my robe, and throwing myself down by the skirt of one of the tents, gave way to meditations, sweet and bitter. They passed into my sleep and I was once more in the bosom of my family. Salathiel's Demand

I heard my name pronounced! I listened; the name of my wife followed. I looked to the sky, to the forest, to convince me that this was no mockery of the diseased mind. I was fully awake. I lifted up the corner of the tent. Savage figures were sitting over their cups, inflamed into quarrel; and, in the midst of high words and execrations, I heard their story. They were robbers from Mount Amanus," come equally to purify their hands by offering sacrifice at Lebanon, and to recompense themselves for their lost time by robbing on the way home. The quarrel had arisen from the proposal of one of them to extend their expedition into Judea, a proposal which he sustained by mentioning the success of his previous enterprises. My name was again sent from mouth to mouth, and I found that it was inscribed on some jewel which formed a part of his plunder. The thought struck me that this might afford a clue. I burst into the tent and demanded tidings of my wife and children. The ruffians started, as if in the presence of a specter.

"Where," I repeated, "are my family? I am Salathiel!"

"Safe enough," said the foremost.

"Are they alive?" I cried; "lead me where they are, and you shall have whatever ransom you desire."

The ruffian laughed. "Why, as for ransom, all the money has been made by them that is likely to be made for some time, unless the Greek that bought them repents of his bargain."

The speech was received with loud laughter. I grew furious.

"Villains, you have murdered them. Tell me the whole—show me where they lie, or I will deliver you up to the chief of the caravan as robbers and murderers."

They were appalled; with a single stride I was at the

In Search of a Family

throat of the leading ruffian, and seized the jewel; it was my bridal present to Miriam! My hand trembled, my eyes grew dim at the glance. But in the next moment I found myself pinioned, a gag forced into my mouth, a cloak flung over me, and I heard the discussion—whether I was to be stabbed on the spot, left to die of famine, or have my tongue cut out, and thus unfitted for telling secrets, be turned to gain and sold for a slave.

But this was not to be my lot. The quarrel of the banditti increased with their wine; blows were given; the solitary lamp was thrown down in the conflict; it caught some combustible matter, and the tent was in a blaze. By a violent exertion I loosened the cords from my arms, and in the confusion fled unseen. The fire spread, and my last glance at the valley showed the encampment turned into a sheet of fire. Alone, and exhausted with deadly fatigue, I yet had but one thought, that of seeking my family through the world. I wandered on through the vast range of wild country that guards Syria on the side of the desert. I was parched by the burning noon, I was frozen by the keen winds of night; I hungered and thirsted, yet the determination was strong as death, and I persevered. I at length reached the foot of Mount Amanus, traversed the chain, saw from it the interminable plains of Asia Minor, the desert of Aleppo, the shores of Tripoli, and was then left only to choose in which I should again commence my hopeless pilgrimage.

There is something in great distress of mind that throws a strange protection round the sufferer. I passed the Roman guards unquestioned—the robber left me without inquiring whether I was worth his dagger. The wolves, driven down by famine, and devouring all else that had life, neglected the banquet that I might have supplied. Yet I shrank from nothing, and marched on through city, cave and forest. But one evening the sky was loaded with a tempest that drove even me to seek for shelter. I found it in one of the caverns, that so often scare the mariner's eye, on the iron-bound shore of Cilicia.

Fatigue soon threw me into a heavy slumber. The weight

of the tempest toward midnight roused me, and from the mouth of the cavern I gazed on the lightning that disclosed at every explosion the sea rolling in foaming ridges before the gale. In the intervals of the gusts I heard, to my surprise, the murmur of many voices, apparently in prayer, close beside me. But all my interest was suddenly fixed on the sea by the sight of a large war-galley running before the wind. She had neither sail nor oar. Her masts were gone and but for the crowd of people on her deck, whose distracted attitudes I could clearly see by the flashes, she looked a floating tomb.

To warn the galley of the nearness of the shore, I gathered the brushwood beside me, and set it on fire. A shout from the crew told that my signal was understood, and I rushed down the bed of a stream that fretted its way through the precipice. Before I reached the shore, I saw various fires blazing above, and many figures hurrying down on a purpose like my own. We had not arrived too soon. The galley, after desperate efforts to keep the sea, had run for an inlet of the rocks and was embayed; surge on surge, each higher than the one before, now rolled over the ill-fated vessel, and each swept some portion of her crew into the deep. We rushed into the waves and had succeeded in drawing many to shore when a broader burst, the concentrated force of the tempest, thundered on the galley; she was broken into splinters. Stunned and half-suffocated with the surge, I grasped, in the mere instinct of self-preservation, at whatever was nearest and, through infinite hazard, reached the shore with a body in my arms. Need I tell my terror, anxiety, hope, and joy when I found that this being, whom I saw at length breathing, moving, pronouncing my name, falling on my neck, was Miriam!

My daughters, too, were rescued. The nearness of the shore saved the crew, who, until they saw the fire on the rocks, had given themselves up to despair. The chance of help led them to steer close inland, and I was congratulated as the general preserver. Miriam's story was brief. Our dwelling had been surrounded by a troop of robbers. The household were surprised in their sleep. Resistance was

Among Robbers

vain; the rest was plunder and captivity. The robbers, fearful of pursuit, took the road to the mountains at full speed. My wife and daughters were treated with unusual care, lest their beauty should be injured, and thus their value in the slave-market of Tripoli impaired. As the robber told me, they had been purchased by a merchant of Cyprus, and by him conveyed to his island to be sold to some more opulent master. There they were redeemed by an act of equal generosity and valor, and were returning to Judea when they were overtaken by the storm.

CHAPTER XV

The Appeal of Miriam

WHEN the first tumult of our spirits was passed, I had leisure to see what changes the interval had made in faces so loved. Miriam's betrayed the hours of distress and pain that she must have passed through, but her noble style of beauty, the emanation of a noble mind, was as conspicuous as ever. I even thought, when her eyes met mine from time to time, that they shone with a loftier intelligence, as if misfortune had raised their vision above the things of our trivial world. My daughters' forms had matured, but Salome, the elder, had to a certain degree her mother's look; her glance was bright, yet she was often lost in meditation, and the rapid changes of her cheek from the deepest crimson to the whiteness of the snow alarmed me with menaces of early decay. Esther, too, had undergone her revolution. But it was of the brightest texture. The seas, the skies, the mountains of Greece, filled her glowing spirit with images of new life. She had listened with boundless delight to the traditions of that most brilliant of all people; the works of the pencil and the chisel had met her eye in a profuseness and perfection that she had never contemplated before; her harp had echoed to names of romantic valor and proud patriotism; and as I gazed on her in those hours when in the feeling that she was unobserved she gave way to the rich impulses of her soul, I thought alternately of the prophetess and of the muse.

The shipwreck converted the solitary shore into a little village; the sailors collected the fragments of the vessel and formed them into huts; the caves that ran along the level of the sands supplied habitations in themselves, and by the assistance of those dwellers on the precipice, who had so unexpectedly started to light, the first difficulties of a wild coast

Malathiel meets Constantius

were sufficiently combated. The bustling activity of the Greek mariners and the adroitness with which they availed themselves of all contrivances for passing the heavy hour, their sleights-of-hand, sports and dances, their recitations of popular poems, and their boat-songs, kept the spot in continual animation.

This was my first contact with the actual people, and I acknowledged their right to have been distinguished among the most showy disturbers of mankind. The evil of the character too was displayed without much trouble of disguise. They habitually gamed till they had no better stake than the fragments of their own clothing; but they would game for a shell, for a stone that they picked up on the sands, for anything. They quarreled with as perfect facility as they gamed; the knife was out quick as lightning, but to do them justice their wrath was as brief. The combatants embraced at a word, danced, kissed, and wept; then drank, gamed, quarreled, and were sworn brothers again. But this was Greece in its lowest rank.

Constantius, the commander of the galley, was a specimen of the land which produced a Plato and a Pericles. When I first saw him led to me by Miriam as the champion who had restored her and her children to happiness, I saw virtue and manliness of the highest order in his features. He was in his prime, but a scar across his forehead and the severities of martial life had given early seriousness to his countenance. But his conversation had the full spirit of the spring-time of life. It was incomparably various and animated, altogether free from professional pedantry; it had the interest that belongs to professional feelings. Military adventure, striking traits of warlike intelligence, the composition of the fleets and armies of the various states that fought under the wing of the Roman eagle, were topics on which his fire was exhaustless. On those I listened to him with the strong sympathy of one to whom war must henceforth be the grand pursuit; war for national freedom—war purified of its evil by the most illustrious cause that ever unsheathed the sword.

He had conversation for us all. His intercourse with the

ruling lands of the earth gave him a copious store of recollections, picturesque and strange. Esther combated and questioned the traveler. Salome listened to the warrior—listened and loved. He had higher topics of which I was yet to hear. In the inhabitants of the precipice he found a little colony of his countrymen, fugitive Christians driven out by persecution, to make their home in the wilderness of nature." The long range of caverns which perforated the rock gave them a roof. The fertility of the soil, and the occasional visit of a bark sent by their concealed friends, supplied the necessaries of life, and there they awaited the close of that ferocious tyranny which at length roused the world against Nero—or awaited the end of all suffering in the grave. A succession of storms rendered traveling impossible and detained us among those hermits for some days. I found them intelligent and, in general, men of the higher ranks of knowledge and condition. Some were of celebrated families, and had left behind them opulence and authority. A few were peasants. But misfortune and, still more, principle, extinguished all that was abrupt in the inequality of ranks without leaving license in its stead. Jew as I was, and steadily bound to the customs of my country, I yet did honor to the patience, the humility, and the devotedness of those exiled men. I even once attended their worship on the first day of the week, assured that the abomination of idols was not to be found there, and that I should hear nothing insulting to the name of Israel.

A Simple Worship

The ceremonial was simple. Those who had witnessed the heaven-commanded magnificence of the Temple might smile at the bareness of walls of rock, figured only with the wild herbage; or those who had seen the extravagant and complicated rites of paganism might scorn the few and obvious forms of the homage. But there was the spirit of strong prayer, the breathing of the heart, the unanswerable sincerity. Every violence of the mere animal frame was unknown. I saw no pagan convulsion, no fierceness of outcry and gesture, not even the vehement solemnity of the Jew. All was calm; tears stole down, but they stole in silence; knees were bowed, but there was no prostration; prayers fervent and lofty

ment of ...ture were poured forth, but they were in accents uttered less from the lip than from the soul—appeals of hallowed confidence, as to a Being who was sure to hear the voice of children to a Father who, wherever two or three were gathered together, was in the midst of them.

At length the storms cleared away and the sky wore the native azure of the climate. A messenger despatched to Cyprus returned with a vessel for the embarkation of the Greeks. Camels and mules were procured from the neighboring country for our journey, and the morning was fixed on which we were to separate. Yet with so much reason for joy, few resolutions could have been received with less favor. Constantius almost shunned society or shared in it with a silence and depression that made his philosophy more than questionable. Miriam was engaged in long conferences with Salome, from which they both came away much saddened. Esther was thus my chief companion, and she talked of the shore, the sea, and even of the tempests, with heightened interest. The Greeks, sailor and soldier alike, loved too well the romantic ease and careless adventure of the place to look with complacency on the little vessel in which they were to be borne once more into the land of restraint. The fugitive colony were not the slowest in their regrets. They had been deeply prepared for human vicissitudes, and had humbled themselves to all things; yet such is the strong and natural connection of man with man that they lamented the solitude to which they must again be left, like the commencement of a new exile.

There are few things more singular than the blindness which, in matters of the highest importance to ourselves, often hides the truth that is as plain as noon to all other eyes. The cause which had deprived Constantius of his eloquence and Salome of her animation was obvious to every one but me. Nor was the mystery yet to be disclosed to my tardy knowledge. I had strayed through the cliffs, as was my custom after the heat of the day, and was taking a last look at the sea from the edge of the precipice. The sands far below me were covered with preparations for the voyage, which, like our

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"Read the Scriptures. I have prayed for you. Read!"

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journey, was to commence with the rising sun. The little vessel lay, a glittering toy, at anchor with her thread-like streamers playing in the breeze. The sailors were fishing, preparing their evening meal, heaving water and provisions down the rocks, or enjoying themselves over flagons of Syrian wine round their fires. All was the activity of a seaport, but from the height on which I stood, all was but the activity of a mole-hill. Salathiel Alone with Miriam

"And is it of such materials," mused I, "that ambition is made? Is it to command, to be gazed on, to be shouted after by such mites and atoms as those, that life is exhausted in watching and weariness; that our true enjoyments are sacrificed; that the present and the future are equally cast from us; that the hand is dipped in blood and the earth desolated? What must Alexander's triumph have looked to one who saw it from the towers of Babylon? A triumph of emmets!" I smiled at the moral of three hundred feet of precipice.

A step beside me put my philosophy to flight. My wife stood there, and never saw I her beauty more beautiful. The exertion of the ascent had colored her cheek; the breeze had scattered her raven locks across a forehead of the purest white; her lips wore the smile so long absent, and there was altogether an air of hope and joy in her countenance that made me instinctively ask of what good news she was the bearer. Without a word, she sat down beside me and pressed my hand; she fixed her eyes on mine, tried to speak, and failing, fell on my neck and burst into tears. Alarmed by her sobs and the wild beating of her heart, I was about to rise for assistance when she detained me, and the smile returned; she bared her forehead to the breeze, and recovering, disburdened her soul.

"How many billows," said she, gazing on the sea, "will roll between that little bark and this shore to-morrow! There is always something melancholy in parting. Yet if that vessel could feel, with what delight would she not wing her way to Cyprus, lovely Cyprus!"

I was surprised. "Miriam! this from you? Can you regret the place of paganism—the land of your captivity?"

Miriam Speaks Constantius

"No," was the answer, with a look of lofty truth; "I abhorred the guilty profanations of the pagan; and who can love the dungeon? Even were Cyprus a paradise, I should have felt unhappy in the separation from my country and from you. Yet those alone who have seen the matchless loveliness of the island—the perpetual animation of life in a climate and in the midst of scenes made for happiness—can know the sacrifice that must be made by its people in leaving it, and leaving it perhaps forever."

"The crew of that galley are not to be tried by long exile. In two days at furthest, they will anchor in their own harbor," was my only answer.

"And how deeply must the sacrifice be enhanced by the abandonment of rank, wealth, professional honors!—and this is the sacrifice on which I have been sent to consult my husband."

I was totally at a loss to conceive of whom she spoke.

"Our friend—our deliverer from captivity or death—the generous being who, through infinite hazards, restored your wife and children to happiness and home——"

"Constantius? Impossible! At the very age of ambition, with his talents, his knowledge of life, his prospects of distinction!"

"Constantius will never return to Cyprus in that galley—will never draw sword for Rome again—will never quit the land given by Heaven to our fathers, if such be the will of Salathiel."

"Strange. But his motives? He is superior to the fickleness that abandons an honorable course of life through the pure love of novelty—or is he weary of the absurdities of paganism?"

"Thoroughly weary—more than weary: he has abjured them forever and ever."

"You rejoice me. But it was to be expected from his manly mind. You have brought an illustrious convert, my beloved! and if your captivity has done this, it was the will of Heaven. Constantius shall be led with distinction to the Temple and be one of ourselves. Judea may yet require such

men. Our holy religion may exult in such conquests from the darkness of the idolatrous world." Miriam's Candor

The voice of the hermits at their evening prayer now arose and held us in a silence which neither seemed inclined to break. Many thoughts pressed on my mind: the addition to our circle of a man whom I honored and esteemed; the accession of a practised soldier to our cause; the near approach of the hour of conflict; the precarious fate of those I loved in the great convulsion which was to rend away the Roman yoke or leave Judea a tomb. I accidentally looked up and saw that Miriam had been as abstracted as myself. But war and policy were not in the contemplations of the beaming countenance; nor their words on the lips that quivered and crimsoned before me. Her eyes were fixed on the sky, and she was in evident prayer, which I desired not to disturb.

She at length caught my glance and blushed like one detected; but quickly recovering, said in a tone never to be forgotten: "My husband! my lord! my love! would that I dared open my whole spirit to you! would that you could read for yourself the truths written in my heart!"

"Miriam!"

"This is no reproach. But I know your strength of opinion —your passion for all that concerns the glory of Israel; your right, the right of talents and character to the foremost rank among the priesthood—and those things repel me."

"Speak out at once. We can have no concealments, Miriam; candor, candor in all things."

"You have heard the prayers of those exiles; you acknowledge their acquirements and understandings; they have sacrificed much, everything—friends, country, the world. Can such men have been imposed on? Can they have imposed on themselves? Is it possible that their sacrifices could have been made for a fiction?"

"Perhaps not; the question is difficult. We are strangely the slaves of impulse. Men every day abandon the most obvious good for the most palpable follies. Enthusiasm is a minor madness."

"But are those exiles enthusiasts? They are grave men,

The Hope of Israel

experienced in life; their language is totally free from extravagance; they reason with singular clearness; they live with the most striking command over the habits of their original condition. Greeks as they are, you see no haste of temper, you hear no violence of language among them. Once idolaters, they shrink from the thought of idols. Now fugitive and persecuted, they pray for their persecutors. Sharing the lair of wild beasts, and driven out from all that they knew and loved, they utter no complaint—they even rejoice in their calamity and offer up praises to the mercy that shut the gates of earth upon their steps, only to open the gates of heaven."

"I am no persecutor, Miriam. Nay, I honor the self-denial, as I doubt not the sincerity of those men. But if they have thrown off a portion of their early blindness, why not desire the full illumination? Why linger half-way between falsehood and truth? It is not, as you know, our custom to solicit proselytes. But such men might be not unworthy of the hope of Israel."

"It is to the hope of Israel that they have come, that they cling, that they look up for a recompense—a glorious recompense for their sufferings."

"Let them then join us at sunrise, and come to our holy city."

"Salathiel, the time is declared when men shall worship not in that mountain alone, but through all lands; when the yoke of our law shall be lightened and the weary shall have rest; when the altar shall pass away as the illustrious victim has passed, and the wisdom of heaven shall be the possession of all mankind."

I looked at her in astonishment. "Miriam, this from you! from a daughter of the blood of Jacob! from the wife of a servant of the Temple! Have you become a Christian?"

"I have done nothing in presumption. I have prayed to the Source of light that He would enlighten my understanding; I have, night and day, examined the law and the prophets. Bear with my weakness, Salathiel, if it be proved weakness. But if it be wisdom, knowledge, and truth, I implore you by

our love, nay, by the higher interests of your own soul, to follow my example."

It was impossible to answer harshly to a remonstrance expressed with the overflowing fondness of the heart: I could only remind her of the unchangeable promises made to Judaism.

"But it is of those promises I speak," urged she; "we have seen the day that our father Abraham longed to see; that mighty Being, the Lord of eternity, the express image of the glory of the Invisible, the hope of the patriarch, the promise of the prophet, has come."

I was alarmed.

"Yet Israel is divided and enslaved, torn by capricious tyranny, and hurrying to the common ruin of doomed nations. Is this the triumphant kingdom of prophecy?"

"Salathiel, I have doubted like you; but I have been at length convinced out of the mouths of the prophets themselves. Have they not declared that Israel should suffer before it triumphed, and suffer too for a period that strikes the mind with terror? that the King of Israel should be excluded from his kingdom—nay, take upon him the form of a servant—nay, die, and die by a death of pain and shame the death of a slave and criminal?"

"It is so written. But it is beyond our power to reconcile."

"Pray then for the power, and it will be given to you. Ask for the spirit of holy intelligence, and it will enlighten you. Pride is the crime of our nation. Humility would take the veil from the eyes of our people. Salathiel, my lord, the being treasured in my heart! read the Scriptures. I have prayed for you. Read——"

"But how can the promise of the kingdom be denied? It is the theme first, last, and without end of all the inspired masters of Israel. What splendor and reality of history was ever more vivid and real than the glorious promises of Isaiah?" I murmured.

"Yet what force and minuteness of picturing ever excelled Isaiah's description of the lowliness, the obscurity, the rejection, the agonies, and the death of the Messiah? Why shall we suppose that the one description is true and the other false?

Salathiel Considers Paganism

Has not the same inspiration given both? Why shall we conceive that the Messiah and His kingdom must appear together? We see the time of His first coming defined to a year, by our great prophet Daniel. But where do we see the time of the triumphant kingdom defined? Why may it not follow at a distance of ages? We know that we shall stand at the latter day upon the earth and in our flesh shall see God. Why shall not the triumph be reserved for that day of glory? Are our people now fit to be a nation of kings? Or are the best of us, in the mortal feebleness of our nature, fit to share in a triumph in which angels are to minister? fit dwellers of a city from which error and evil are to be excluded; in which there is to be no tear, no human suffering, no remembered bitterness; 'a city whose builder and maker is God'; within whose walls live holiness, power, and virtue; on whose throne sits the Omnipotent!"

Sensations to which I dared not give utterance oppressed me; my crime, my fate, rose up before the mental eye. I had no answer for this admirable woman. Her pure zeal and her holiness of heart touched me deeply. But let no man blame my stubbornness until he has weighed the influence of feelings, born in a people, strengthened by their history, reenforced by miracle, and authenticated by the words of inspiration. That Judaism was purity itself to the worship and morals of the pagan world, that it was the continued object of a particular Providence, that it alone possessed the revelations of God, were facts that defied doubt. And that those high distinctions should be made void, and the slavish mind of paganism be admitted into our privileges—still more, that it should be admitted to the exclusion of the chosen line—seemed to me a conclusion that no reasoning could substantiate; a fantastic and airy fiction to which no reasoning could be applied.

The moon ascended in serenity, and her orb, slightly tinged by the many-colored clouds that lay upon the horizon, threw a faint silver upon the precipice. The sounds below were hushed; the moving figures, the vessel, the sea, the cliffs, were totally veiled in purple mist. We could not have been

more alone if we had been seated on a cloud, and the beauty, the exalted gesture, and the glowing wisdom of the being before me were like those that we conceive of spirits delegated to lead the disembodied mind upward from world to world. A sea-bird winging its way above our heads broke the reverie. I reminded my teacher that it grew late and our absence might produce anxiety. The Secret of Scroll

"Salathiel," said she, with mingled fervor and softness, "you know I love you; never was heart more fondly bound to another than is mine to you. I am grateful for your permission to receive Constantius into our tribe. But one obligation, infinitely dearer, you can confer on me—read this scroll." She drew from her bosom a letter, written to his church by one of the Christian leaders in Asia. "I desire not to offend your convictions, nor to hasten you into a rash adoption of those of others. But in this scroll you will find philosophy without its pride, and knowledge without its guile; you will find, furthermore, the disclosure of those mysteries which have so long perplexed our people. Read, and may He who can bring wisdom out of the lips of babes, and make the wisdom of the wise foolishness, shed His light upon the generous heart of my husband!"

At another time I might have started in horror from this avowal of her faith. But the scene, the circumstances, an unaccountable internal impression—a voice of the soul, prohibited me. I took her trembling hand, and without a word led her down to our dwelling.

CHAPTER XVI

The Heart of Salome

No tidings sooner make themselves known than those of the heart. We found our daughters waiting anxiously at the entrance of the cave, which had been fitted up for our temporary shelter. Before a word could be exchanged, a glance from Miriam told the success of her mission, and anxiety was turned into delight. Esther danced round me and was eloquent in her gratitude. Salome shed silent tears, and when I attempted to wipe them away, fell fainting into my arms. We spent a part of the night in the open air; the last wine and fruits of our store were brought out; the Cypriot exiles came down from their rocks; the crew of the galley, already on board, danced, sang, and drank to the success of the voyage; and it was not till the moon, our only lamp, was about to be extinguished in the waters, that we thought of closing our final night on the Syrian shore.

We traveled along the coast as far as Berytus; then turning to the eastward, crossed the Libanus and the mountain country that branches into Upper Galilee. Our coming had been long announced, and we found Eleazar, Jubal, and our chief kinsmen waiting at one of the passes to lead us home in triumph. The joy of our tribe was honest if it was tumultuous, and many a shout disturbed the solitude as we moved along. My impatience increased when we reached the well-known hills that sheltered what was once my home. Yet I remembered too keenly the shock of seeing its desolation not to dread the first sight of the spot, and rode away from the group at full speed that my nervousness might have time to subside before their arrival. But at the foot of the last ascent I drew the rein. Every tree, every bush, almost every

stone, had been familiar to me in my wanderings, and were now painful memorials of the long malady of my mind. A Surprising Change

Eleazar, who watched me during the latter part of the journey with something of a consciousness of my thoughts, put spurs to his horse, and found me standing, pale and palpitating.

"Come," said he, "we must not alarm Miriam by thinking too much of the past; let us try if the top of the hill will not give us a better prospect than the bottom."

I shrank from the attempt.

"No!" said I; "the horror that the prospect once gave me must not be renewed. Let us change the route, no matter how far round; the sight of that ruin would distract me to the last hour of my life."

He only smiled in reply, and catching my bridle, galloped forward. A few seconds placed us on the summit of the hill. Could I believe my eyes! All below was as if rapine had never been there. The gardens, the cattle, the dwellings, lay a living picture under the eye.

"This is miracle!" I exclaimed.

"No; or it is but the miracle of a little activity and a great deal of good will," was the answer of my companion. "Your kinsmen did this at the time when you were slumbering with the wolf and bear in the Libanus; Nature did her part in covering your fields and gardens; and those sheep and cattle are a tribute of gratitude from your brother for the preservation of his life."

Our troop now ascended the height. The land lay beneath them in the luxuriance of summer. They were ardent in their expressions of surprise and pleasure. We rushed down the defile, and I was once more master of a home. Public events had rapidly ripened in my absence.[14] Popular wrath was stimulated by increased exaction. Law was more palpably perverted into insolence. Order was giving way on all sides. The Roman garrisons, neglected and ill paid, were adopting the desperate habits of the populace, and in the general scorn of religion and right, the country was becoming a horde of robbers. The ultimate causes of this singular degeneracy

The Policy of Rome

might be remote and set in action by a vengeance above man; but the immediate causes were plain to every eye.

The general principles of Rome in the government of her conquests were manly and wise. When the soldier had done his work—and it was done vigorously, yet with but little violence beyond that which was essential for complete subjugation—the sword slept as an instrument of evil, and awoke only as an instrument of justice.

If neighboring kingdoms quarreled, a legion marched across the border and brought the belligerents to sudden reason; dismissed their armies to their hearths and altars, and sent the angry chiefs to reconcile their claims in an Italian dungeon. If a disputed succession threatened to embroil the general peace, the proconsul ordered the royal competitors to embark for Rome, and there settle the right before the senate.

The barbaric invasions which had periodically ravaged the Eastern empires even in their day of power were repelled with a terrible vigor. The legions left the desert covered with the tribe for the feast of the vulture, and showed to Europe the haughty leaders of the Tatar, Gothic, and Arab myriads in fetters, dragging wains, digging in mines, or sweeping the highways.

If peace could be an equivalent for freedom, the equivalent was never so amply secured. The world within this iron boundary flourished; the activity and talent of man were urged to the highest pitch; the conquered countries were turned from wastes and forests into fertility; ports were dug upon naked shores; cities swelled from villages; population spread over the soil once pestilential and breeding only the weed and the serpent. The sea was covered with trade; the pirate and the marauder were unheard of or hunted down. Commercial enterprise shot its lines and communications over the map of the earth, and regions were then familiar which even the activity of the revived ages of Europe has scarcely made known.

Those were the wonders of great power steadily directed to a great purpose. General coercion was the simple principle,

and the only talisman of a Roman Emperor was the chain, except where it was casually commuted for the sword; the universality of the compression atoned for half its evil. The natural impulse of man is to improvement; he requires only security from rapine. The Roman supremacy raised round him an impregnable wall. It was the true government for an era when the habits of reason had not penetrated the general human mind. Its chief evil was in its restraint of those nobler and loftier aspirations of genius and the heart which from time to time raise the general scale of mankind. The Absence of Genius

Nothing is more observable than the decay of original literature, of the finer architecture and of philosophical invention, under the empire. Even military genius, the natural product of a system that lived but on military fame, disappeared; the brilliant diversity of warlike talent that shone on the very verge of the succession of the Cæsars sank like falling stars, to rise no more. No captain was again to display the splendid conception of Pompey's boundless campaigns; the lavish heroism and inexhaustible resource of Antony; or the mixture of undaunted personal enterprise and profound tactic, the statesmanlike thought, generous ambition, and high-minded pride that made Cæsar the very emblem of Rome. But the imperial power had the operation of one of those great laws of nature which through partial evil sustain the earth—a gravitating principle which, if it checked the ascent of some gifted beings beyond the dull level of life, yet kept the infinite multitude of men and things from flying loose beyond all utility and all control.

Yet it was only for a time. The empire was but the superstructure of the republic, a richer, more luxuriant, and more transitory object for the eye of the world, and the storm was already gathering that was to shake it to the ground. The corruptions of the palace first opened the imperial ruin. They soon extended through every department of the state. If the habitual fears of the tyrant in the midst of a headlong populace could scarcely restrain him in Rome, what must be the excesses of his minions where no fear was felt, where complaint was stifled by the dagger, and where the govern-

Roman Avarice

ment was bought with bribes, to be replaced only by licensed rapine!

The East was the chief victim. The vast northern and western provinces of the empire pressed too closely on Rome, were too poor and too warlike to be the favorite objects of Italian rapacity. There a new tax raised an insurrection; the proconsular demand of a loan was answered by a flight which stripped the land, or by the march of some unheard-of tribe, pouring down from the desert to avenge their countrymen. The character, too, of the people, influenced the choice of their governors. Brave and experienced soldiers, not empty and vicious courtiers, must command the armies that were thus liable to be hourly in battle, and on whose discipline depended the slumbers of every pillow in Italy. Stern as is the life of camps, it has its virtues, and men are taught consideration for the feelings, rights, and resentments of man by a teacher that makes its voice heard through the tumult of battle and the pride of victory. But all was reversed in Asia, remote, rich, habituated to despotism, divided in language, religion, and blood; with nothing of that fierce, yet generous clanship, which made the Gaul of the Belgian marshes listen to the trumpet of the Gaul of Narbonne, and the German of the Vistula burn with the wrongs of the German of the Rhine.

Under Nero, Judea was devoured by Roman avarice. She had not even the sad consolation of owing her evils to the ravage of those nobler beasts of prey in human shape that were to be found in the other provinces—she was devoured by locusts. The polluted palace supplied her governors; a slave lifted into office by a fellow slave; a pampered profligate, exhausted by the expenses of the capital; a condemned and notorious extortioner, with no other spot to hide his head, were the gifts of Nero to my country. Pilate, Felix, Festus, Albinus, Florus, a race more profligate and cruel as our catastrophe approached, tore the very bowels of the land. Of the last two it was said that Albinus should have been grateful to Florus for proving that he was not the basest of mankind, by the evidence that a baser existed; that he had a respect for virtue by his condescending to commit those robberies

in private which his successor committed in public; and that he had human feeling by his abstaining from blood where he could gain nothing by murder; while Florus disdained alike concealment and cause, and slaughtered for the public pleasure of the sword! The Discovery of Danger

A number of partial insurrections, easily suppressed, displayed the wrath of the people and indulged the cruelty of the procurator. They indulged also his avarice. Defeat was followed by confiscation; and Florus even boasted that he desired nothing more prosperous than insurrection in every village of Judea. He was about to be gratified before he had prepared himself for this luxury!

A menial in my house was detected with letters from an agent of the Roman governor. They required details of my habits and resources, which satisfied me that I had become an object of vengeance. From the time of my return I had seen with bitterness of soul the insults to my country. I had summoned my friends to ascertain what might be our means of resistance, and found them as willing and devoted as became men; but our resources for more than the first burst of popular wrath, the seizure of some petty Roman garrison, or the capture of a convoy, were nothing. The jealousies of the chief men of the tribes, the terrors of Rome, the positions of the Roman troops, cutting off military communication between the north and south of Judea, made the attempt hopeless, and it was abandoned for the time. Even those letters which marked me for a victim made no change in my determination that if I could not escape danger by individual means, no public blood should be laid to my charge. For a few months all was tranquil; the habits of rural life are calculated to keep depressing thoughts at a distance. My wife and daughters returned to their graceful pursuits, with the added pleasure of novelty after so long a cessation. I hunted through the hills with Constantius, or, traversing the country which might yet be the scene of events, availed myself of the knowledge of a master of the whole science of Roman war.

At home the works of the great poets of the West, with whom our guest had made us familiar, varied the hours; but

Balatbiel's Love for History

I found a still more stirring and congenial interest in the histories of Greek valor, and in the study of the mighty minds that made and unmade empires.

With the touching and picturesque narrative of Herodotus in my hand, I pantingly followed the adventures of the most brilliant of nations. I fought the battle with them against the Persian; I saw them gathered in little startled groups on the hills, or flying in their little galleys from island to island, the land deserted, the sea covered with fugitives; the Persian fleets loaded with Asiatic pomp, darkening the waters like a thunder-cloud—and in a moment all changed! The millions of Asia scattered like dust before the wind—Greece lifted to the height of martial glory, and commencing a career of triumph still more illustrious, that triumph of the mind in which, through the remotest vicissitudes of earth, she was to have no conqueror.

I especially and passionately pursued the campaigns of that extraordinary man Arrian, whose valor, vanity, and fortune make him one of the landmarks of human nature. In Alexander I delighted in tracing the native form of the Greek through the embroidered robes of royalty and triumph. In his romantic intrepidity and deliberate science, his alternations of profound thought and fantastic folly, the passion for praise and the contempt for its offerers, the rash temper and the noble magnanimity, the love for the arts and the thirst for that perpetual war before which they fly, the philosophic scorn of privation and the feeble lapses into self-indulgence; the generous forecast, which peopled deserts and founded cities, and the giddy and fatal neglect which left his diadem to be fought for and his family to be the prey of rival rebellions,—I saw the true man of the republic; not the lord of the rugged hills of Macedon, but the Athenian of the day of popular splendor and folly, with only the difference of the scepter.

To me those studies were like a new door opened into the boundless palace of human nature. I felt that sense of novelty, vigor, and fresh life that the frame feels in breathing the morning air over the landscape of a new country. It was

a voyage on an unknown sea, where every headland administers to the delight of curiosity. In this there was nothing of the common pedantry of the schools. My knowledge of life had hitherto been limited by my original destination. A Jew and a priest, there was but one solemn avenue through which I was to see the glimpses of the external world. The vista was now opened beyond all limit; visions of conquest, of honor among nations, of praise to the last posterity, clustered round my head. There were times when in this exultation even my doom was forgotten. The momentary oblivion may have been permitted merely to blunt the edge of incurable misfortune. I was permitted at intervals to recruit the strength that was to be tried till the end of time.

Eleazar's Disclosure

I was one day immersed in Polybius, with my master in soldiership at my side, guiding me by his living comment through the wonders of the Punic campaigns, when Eleazar entered, with a look that implied his coming on a matter of importance. Constantius rose to withdraw.

"No," said my brother, "the subject of my mission is one that should not be concealed from the preserver of our kindred. It may be one of happiness to us all. Salome has arrived at the age when the daughters of Israel marry. She must give way to our general wish and play the matron at last."

He turned with a smile to Constantius, and asked his assent to the opinion; he received no answer. The young Greek had plunged more deeply than ever into the passage of the Alps.

"And who is the suitor?" I inquired.

"One worthy of her and you. A generous, bold, warm-hearted kinsman, in the spring of life, sufficiently opulent, for he will probably be my heir, prepared to honor you, and, I believe, long and deeply attached to her."

"Jubal! There is not a man in our tribe to whom I would more gladly give her. Let my friend Jubal come. Congratulate me, Constantius; you shall now at last see festivity in our land in scorn of the Roman. You have seen us in flight and captivity; you shall now witness some of the happiness

Jubal's Cause

that was in Judah before we knew the flapping of an Italian banner, and which shall be, if fortune smile, when Rome is like Babylon."

Constantius suddenly rose from his volume, and thrusting it within the folds of his tunic, was leaving the apartment.

"No," said I, "you must remain; Miriam and Salome shall be sent for, and in your presence the contract signed."

For the first time I perceived the excessive pallidness of his countenance, and asked whether I had not trespassed too much on his patience with my studies.

His only reply was: "Is there no liberty of choice in the marriages of Israel? Will you decide without consulting her, whom this contract is to render happy or miserable while she lives?" He rushed from the room.

Miriam came—but alone. Her daughter had wandered out into one of our many gardens. She received Eleazar with sisterly fondness, but her features wore the air of constraint. She heard the mission, but "she had no opinion to give in the absence of Salome. She knew too well the happiness of having chosen for herself to wish to force the consent of her child. Let Salome be consulted."

The flourish of music and the trampling of horses broke up our reluctant conference. Jubal had already come with a crowd of his friends. We hastened to receive him at the porch, and he bounded into the court on his richly caparisoned barb, at the head of a troop in festal habiliments.

The men of Israel loved pomp of dress and handsome steeds. The group before me might have made a body-guard for a Persian king. Jubal had long looked on my daughter with the admiration due to her singular beauty; it was the custom to wed within our tribe; he was the favorite and the heir of her uncle; she had never absolutely banished him from her presence, and in the buoyancy of natural spirits, the boldness of a temperament born for a soldier, and perhaps in the allowable consciousness of a showy form, he had admitted none of the perplexities of a trembling lover. Salome was at length announced, and the proposed husband was left to plead his own cause.

CHAPTER XVII

A Declaration of Love

Salathiel overhears Salome

We received the friends of our intended son with the accustomed hospitality, but to me the tumult of many voices, and even the sight of a crowd, however happy, still excited the old disturbances of a shaken mind.

I left my guests to the care of Eleazar, and galloped into the fields to gather composure from the air of fruits and flowers. A homeward glance showed me, to my surprise, the whole troop mounted, and in another moment at speed across the hills. I hastened back. Miriam met me. My kinsman had openly disclaimed my alliance.

Indignant and disappointed, I prepared to follow him and demand the cause of this insult. As I passed one of the pavilions, my daughter's voice arrested me. She was talking to Constantius. Scorning mere curiosity, I yet was anxious for sincere explanation. I felt that if Salome had a wish which she feared to divulge to her father, this was my only hope of obtaining the knowledge. The voices were low, and I could, for a while, catch but a broken sentence.

"I owed it to him," said she, "not to deceive his partiality. He offered all that it could have done a Jewish maiden honor to receive—his heart, hand, and fortune."

"And you rejected them all?" said Constantius. "Have you no regrets for the lover—no fears of the father?"

"For the lover I had too high an esteem to give him a promise which I could not keep. I knew his generous nature. I told him at once that there was an invincible obstacle!"

"I should like incomparably to know what that obstacle could be?" said Constantius.

Astonishment fixed me to the spot. I was unable to move a step.

and The natural playfulness of the sweet and light-hearted girl became manifest, and she replied "that a philosopher ought to know all things without questioning."

"But there is much in the world that defies philosophy, my fair Salome; and of all its problems, the most perplexing is the mind of woman!—of young, lovely, dangerous woman!"

"Now, Constantius, you abandon the philosopher and play the poet."

"Yet without the poet's imagination. No; I need picture no beauty from the clouds—no nymph from the fountains—no loveliness that haunts the trees, and breathes more than mortal melody on the ear. Salome! my muse is before me."

"You are a Greek," said she, after a slight interval, "and Greeks are privileged to talk—and to deceive."

"Salome! I am a Greek no longer. What I shall yet be may depend upon the fairest artist that ever fashioned the human mind. But mine are not the words of inexperience. I am on this day five-and-twenty years old. My life has led me into all that is various in the intercourse of earth. I have seen woman in her beauty, in her talent, in her art, in her accomplishment; from the cottage to the throne—but I never felt her real power before."

"Which am I to believe—the possible or the impossible? A soldier! a noble! a Greek! and of all Greeks, one of Cyprus! the offerer of your eloquence at every shrine where your own lovely countrywomen stood by the altar!—I too have seen the world."

"May all the Graces forbid that you should ever see it, but what it would be made by such as you—a place of gentleness and harmony—a place of fondness and innocence—a paradise!"

"Now you are further from the philosopher than ever; but —I must listen no more; the sun is taking its leave of us, and blushing its last through the vines for all the fine romance that it has heard from Constantius. Farewell, philosophy."

"Then farewell, philosophy," said Constantius, and caught her hand as she was lightly moving from the pavilion. He led her toward the casement. "Then farewell, philosophy, my sweet; and welcome truth, virtue, and nature. I loved

you in your captivity; I loved you in your freedom; on the sea, on the shore, in the desert, in your home, I loved you. In life I will love you, in death we shall not be divided. This is not the language of mere admiration, the rapture of a fancy dazzled by the bright eyes of my Salome. It is the language of reason, of sacred truth, of honor bound by higher than human bonds; of fondness that even the tomb will render only more ardent and sublime. Here, in the sight of Heaven, I pledge an immortal to an immortal."

Astonishment and grief alone prevented my exclaiming aloud against this bond on the affections of my child. The marriage of the Israelite with the stranger was prohibited by our law, and still more severely prohibited by the later ordinances of our teachers. But marriage with a fugitive, an alien, a son of the idolater, whose proselytism had never been avowed, and whose skill in the ways of the world might be at this hour undermining the peace or the faith of my whole family—the idea was tenfold profanation! I checked myself only to have complete evidence.

"But," said my daughter, in a voice mingled with many a sigh, "if this should become known to my father—and known it must be—how can we hope for his consent? Now, Constantius, you will have to learn what it is to deal with our nation. We have prejudices, lofty, tho blind — indissoluble, tho fantastic. My father's consent is beyond all hope."

"He is honorable—he has human feeling—he loves you."

"Fondly, I believe, and I must not thus return his love; no, tho my happiness were to be the forfeit, I must not pain his heart by the disobedience of his child."

"But Salome, my sweet Salome! are obstinacy and prejudice to be obeyed against the understanding and the heart? Can a father counsel his child to a crime, and would it not be one to give your faith to this Jubal, if you could not love him?"

"I have decided that already. Never will I wed Jubal."

"Yet what is it that you would disobey—a cruel and fantastic scruple of your teachers, the perverters of your law?

Must we sacrifice reason to prejudice, truth to caprice, the law of nature and of heaven to the forgeries and follies of the Scribes? Mine you are, and mine you shall be, my wife by a law more sacred, more powerful, and more pure. The time of bondage is passed. A new law, a new hope, have come to break the chains of the Jew and enlighten the darkness of the Gentile. You have heard that law; your generous heart and unclouded understanding have received it, and now by that common hope, my beloved, we are one, tho seas and mountains should separate us — tho the malice of fortune and the tyranny of man should forbid our union; still, in flight, in the dungeon, in the last hour of a troubled existence, we are one. Now, Salome, I will go, but go to seek your father."

My indignation rose to its height. I had heard my child taught to rebel. I had heard myself pronounced the slave of prejudice. But the open declaration that my authority was to be to my child a law no more let loose the whole storm of my soul. I rushed forward; Salome uttered a cry and sank senseless upon the ground. Constantius raised her up and bore her to a vase, from which he sprinkled water upon her forehead.

"Leave her!" I exclaimed; "better for her to remain in that insensibility, better to be dead than an apostate. Villain, begone! it is only in scorn that a father's vengeance suffers you to live. Fly from this house, from this country. Go, traitor, and let me never see you more."

I tore the fainting girl from his arms. He made no resistance, no reply. Salome recovered with a gush of tears, and feebly pronounced his name.

"I am with you still, my love," Constantius assured her.

She looked up and, as if she had then first seen me, sprang forward with a look of terror.

"Go," said I, "go to your chamber, weak girl, and on your knees, atone for your disobedience, for your abandonment of the faith of your fathers. But no, it is impossible; you can not have been so guilty; this Greek—this foreign bringer-

in of fables—this smooth intruder on the peace of families, can not have so triumphed over your understanding."

"I have been rash, sir," said Constantius loftily; "I may have been unwise, too, in my language; but I have been no deceiver. Not for the wealth of kings—not even for the more precious treasure of the heart I love—would I sully my lips with a falsehood."

"Begone!" cried I; "I am insulted by your presence. Go and pervert others—hypocrite; or rather, take my contemptuous forgiveness and repent, in sackcloth and ashes, the basest crime of the basest mind. Come, daughter, and leave the baffled idolater to think of his crime."

I was leading her away—she hesitated, and I cast her from me. Constantius, with his cheek burning and his eye flashing, approached her. My taunts had at length roused him.

"Now, Salome," said he, haughtily glancing on me, "injured as I am, I disclaim an idle deference for an authority used only to give pain. You are my betrothed; you shall be my bride. Let us go forth and try our chance together through the world."

She was silent and wept only more violently. But with one hand covering her face, she repelled him with the other.

"Then you will be the wife of Jubal?" said he.

"Never!" she firmly pronounced. "So help me heaven, never!"

"Retire, girl," I exclaimed, "and weep tears of blood for your rebellion! Go, stranger—ingrate—deceiver—and never darken my threshold more. Aye, now I see the cause of my brave kinsman's departure. He was circumvented. A wilier tongue was here before him. He disdained to reveal the daughter's folly to the insulted father. But this shall not avail either of you. He shall return."

Salome cast an imploring glance to heaven and sank upon her knees before me. Constantius advanced to her; but I bounded between them—my dagger was drawn.

"Touch her, and you die."

He smiled scornfully, and approached to raise her from the ground.

"Give that wretched child up to me this moment," I exclaimed in fury, "or may the bitterness of a father's curse be on her head!"

He staggered back; then pressing his lips upon her forehead, gave her to me and strode from the pavilion.

I flew to the house of Eleazar. I found him anxious and agitated. Calm as his usual manner was, the late transaction had left its traces on his demeanor and countenance. Jubal was in the apartment, which he traversed backward and forward in high indignation. He made no return to my salute but by stopping short and gazing full on me with a look of mingled anger and surprise.

"Jubal," said I, "kinsman, we must be friends." I held out my hand, which he took with no fervent pressure. "I am here only to explain this idle offense."

"It requires no explanation," interrupted Jubal sternly; "I, and I alone, am to blame—if there be any one to blame in the matter. The offer may have been hasty, or unwelcome, or unpardonable, from one like me, still without rank in the tribe; it may have been fit that I should be haughtily rejected by the family of the descendant of Aaron; but," said he, pressing his strong hand upon his throat, as if to keep down a burst of passion, "the subject is at an end—now and forever at an end."

He recommenced his striding through the chamber.

"Let us hear all, my friend," said I; "I know that Salome thinks highly of your spirit and of your heart. Was there any palliation offered? Did she disclose any secret reason for a conduct which is so opposite to her natural regard for you, and which, she must feel, is so offensive to me? But insult from my family, impossible!"

"Hear, then. I had not alighted from my horse when I saw displeasure written in the face of every female in your household. From the very handmaids up to their mistress, they had, with the instinct of woman, discovered my object, and, with the usual deliberation of the sex, had made up their minds without hearing a syllable. Your wife received me, it is true, with the grace that belongs to her above women, but

she was visibly cold. My kinswoman Esther absolutely shrank from me and scorned to return a word. Salome fled. As for the attendants, they frowned and muttered at me in all directions, with the most candid wrath possible. In short, I could not have fared worse had I been a Roman come to take possession, or an Arab riding up to rifle every soul in the house."

"Ominous enough!" said Eleazar, with his grave smile. "The opinions of the sex are irresistible. With half my knowledge of them, Jubal, you would have turned your horse's head homeward at once, and given up your hopes of a bride at least till the next day, or the next hour, or whatever may be the usual time for the sex's change of mind. Cheer up, kinsman; caparison yourself in another dress, let time do its work —ride over to Salathiel's dwelling to-morrow and find a smile for every frown of to-day."

"But you saw Salome!" said I. "I am impatient to hear how she could have ventured to offend. Could she dare to refuse my brother's request without a reason?"

"No; her conduct was altogether without disguise. She first tried to laugh me out of my purpose, then argued, then wept; and finally, told me that our alliance was impossible."

"Rash girl! but she has been led into this folly by others; yet the chief folly was my own. Aye, my eyes were dim, where a mole would have seen. I suffered a showy, plausible villain to remain under my roof till he has, by what arts I know not, wiled away the duty and the understanding—nay, I fear, the religion of my child." I smote my breast in sorrow and humiliation.

Jubal burst from the apartment and returned with his lance in his hand, quivering with wrath.

"Now all is cleared," cried he; "the true cause was the magic of that idolater. I know the arts of paganism to bewitch the senses of woman—the incantations, the perfumes, the midnight fires, and images and songs. But let him come within the throw of this javelin and then try whether all his magic can shield him."

Eleazar grasped his robe as he was again rushing out.

Eleazar's Advice

"Stop, madman! Is it with hands dipped in blood that you are to solicit the heart of Salome? Give me that horrid weapon; and you, Salathiel, curb your wild spirit and listen to a brother who can have no interest but in the happiness of both and all. If Salome, whom I loved an infant on the knee and love to this moment, the most ingenuous and happy-hearted being on earth, has been betrayed into a fondness for this stranger, have we the right to force her inclinations? I know the depth of understanding that lies under her playfulness; can she have been deceived, and least of all by those arts? Impossible! If she has sacrificed her obedience to the noble form and high accomplishments of the Greek, we can only lament her exposure to a captivation made to subdue the heart of woman since the world began."

"Jubal," interrupted I, "give me that manly and honest hand; Eleazar's wisdom is too calm to understand a father or a lover. You shall return with me, you shall be my son; Salathiel has no other. This foolish girl will be sorry for her follies and rejoice to receive you. The Greek is driven from my house. And let me see who there will henceforth disobey." The lover's face brightened with joy.

"Well, make your experiment," said Eleazar, rising. "So ends all councils of war in more confusion than they began. But if I had a wife and daughters——"

"Of course you would manage them to perfection. So say all who have never had either."

Eleazar's cheek colored slightly; but with his recovering smile of benevolence he followed us to the porch, and wished us success in our expedition.

We found the household tranquillized again. Miriam received me with one of those radiant smiles that are a husband's best welcome home. She had succeeded in calming the minds of her daughters, and—a much more difficult task—in suppressing the wrath of the numerous female domestics who had, as usual, constructed out of the graces of the Greek and the beauty of Salome a little romance of their own. In the whole course of my life I never met a female, from the flat-nosed and ebony-colored monster of the tropics to the snow-

white and sublime divinity of a Greek isle, without a touch of romance; repulsiveness could not conceal it, age could not extinguish it, vicissitude could not change it. I have found it in all times and places, like a spring of fresh waters starting up even from the flint, cheering the cheerless, softening the insensible, renovating the withered; a secret whisper in the ear of every woman alive, that to the last, passion might flutter its pinions round her brow. The strong prejudices of our nation had here given way, rebellion was but hushed, and I was warned by many a look of the unwelcome suitor that I brought among them.

But from Salome there was no remonstrance. I should have listened to none. The consciousness of my own want of judgment in suffering a man so calculated to attract the eye of innocent youth to become an inmate in my house; the vexation which I felt at the dismissal of my brother's heir; and last and keenest pang, the inroad made in the faith of a daughter of Israel, combined to exasperate me beyond the bounds of patience. I loved my child with the strongest affection of a heart rocked by all the tides of passion; but I could bear to look upon the pale beauty of her face—nay, in the wrath of the hour, could have seen her borne to the grave —rather than permit the command to be disputed by which she was to wed in our tribe.

To shorten a period of which I felt the full bitterness, the marriage preparations were hurried on. Never was the ceremony anticipated with less joy; we were all unhappy. Eleazar remonstrated, but in vain. Jubal retracted, but I compelled him to adhere to his proposal. Miriam was closeted perpetually with the betrothed, and of the whole household Esther alone walked or talked with me, and it was then only to give me descriptions of her sister's misery or to pursue me through the endless mazes of argument on the hardship of being forced to be happy. The preparations proceeded. The piece of silver was given, the contracts were signed, the presents of both families were made; the portion was agreed upon. It was not customary to require the appearance of the bride until the celebration itself, and Salome was invisible during those

The Flight of Salome

days of activity in which, however, I took the chief interest, for nothing could be further from zeal than the conduct of the other agents, Jubal alone excepted. He had regained the easily recovered confidence of youth, and perhaps prided himself on the triumph over a rival so formidable. Two or three petitions for an interview came to me from my daughter. But I knew their purport, and steadily determined not to hazard the temptation of her tears.

The day came, and with it the guests; our dwelling was full of banqueting. The evening arrived when the ceremony was to be performed and the bride led home to her husband's house in the usual triumph. One of our customs was that a procession of the bridegroom's younger friends, male and female, should be formed outside the house to wait for the coming forth of the married pair. The ceremony was borrowed by other nations; but in our bright climate and cloudless nights, the profusion of lamps and torches, the burning perfumes, glittering dresses, and fantastic joy of the dancing and singing crowd, had unequaled liveliness and beauty. I remained at my casement, gazing on the brilliant escort that, as it gathered and arranged itself along the gardens, looked like a flight of glow-worms. But no marriage summons came. I grew impatient. My only answer was the sight of Jubal rushing from the house and an outcry among the women. Salome was not to be found! She had been left by herself for a few hours, as was the custom, to arrange her thoughts for a ceremony which we considered religious in the highest degree. On the bridegroom's arrival, she had disappeared!

The blow struck me deep. Had I driven her into the arms of the Greek by my severity? Had I driven her out of her senses, or out of life? Conjecture on conjecture stung me. I reprobated my own cruelty, refused consolation, and spent the night in alternate self-upbraidings and prayers for my unhappy child.

Search was indefatigably made. The fiery jealousy of Jubal, the manly anxiety of Eleazar, the hurt feelings of our tribe, insulted by the possibility that their chieftain's heir should have been scorned, and that the triumph should be to

an alien, were all embarked in the pursuit. But search was in vain; and after days and nights of weariness, I returned to my home, there to be met by sorrowing faces, and to feel that every tear was forced by my own obstinacy. I shrank into solitude. I exclaimed that the vengeance, the more than vengeance of my crime, had struck its heaviest blow on me in the loss of my child.

The Search in Vain

CHAPTER XVIII

Salathiel Faces a Roman

In Pursuit

I WAS in one of those fits of abstraction, revolving the misery in which my beloved daughter might be, if indeed she were in existence, when the door of my chamber opened softly and one of my domestics appeared, making a signal of silence. This was he whom I had detected in correspondence with the Roman agent and forgiven through the entreaties of Miriam. The man had since shown remarkable interest in the recovery of my daughter, and thus completely reinstated himself. He knelt before me, and with more humility than I desired, implored my pardon for having again held intercourse with the Roman.

"It was my zeal," said he, "to gain intelligence, for I knew that nothing passed in the provinces a secret from him. This letter is his answer, and perhaps I shall be forgiven for the sake of what it contains."

I read it with trembling avidity. It was mysterious; described two fugitives who had made their escape to Cæsarea, and intimated that as they were about to fly into Asia Minor, the pursuit must be immediate and conducted with the utmost secrecy.

I was instantly on horseback. Dreading to disturb my family by false hopes, I ordered out my hounds, ranged the hills in sight of my dwelling; and then turning off, struck in the spur, and attended only by the domestic, went full speed to Cæsarea. From the summit of Mount Carmel I looked down upon the city and the broad Mediterranean. But my eyes then felt no delight in the grandeur of art or nature. The pompous structures on which Herod the Great had expended a treasure beyond count, and which the residence of the governor made the Roman capital of Judea, were to me but so many dens and dungeons in which my child might be

hidden. The sea showed me only the path by which she might have been borne away, or the grave in which her wanderings were to close. Before Gessius Flo

By extraordinary speed I entered the gates just as the trumpet was sounding for their close. My attendant went forth to obtain information, and I was left pacing my chamber, to which I had been brought in feverish suspense. I did not suffer it long. The door opened, and a group of soldiers ordered me to follow them. Resistance was useless. They led me to the palace. There I was delivered from guard to guard, through a long succession of apartments, until we reached the door of a banqueting-room. The festivity within was high, and if I could have then sympathized with singing and laughter, I might have had full indulgence during the immeasurable hour that I lingered out, a broken wretch, exhausted by desperate effort, sick at heart, and of course eager for the result of an interview with the Roman procurator, a man whose name was equivalent to vice, extortion, and love of blood throughout Judea.

At length the feast was at an end. I was summoned, and for the first time saw Gessius Florus," a little bloated figure, with a countenance that to the casual observer was the model of gross good-nature, a twinkling eye, and a lip on the perpetual laugh. His bald forehead wore a wreath of flowers, and his tunic and the couch on which he lay breathed perfume. The table before him was a long vista of sculptured cups, and golden vases and candelabra.

"I am sorry to have detained you so long," said he, "but this was the Emperor's birthday, and as good subjects we have kept it accordingly."

During this speech he was engaged in contemplating the wine-bubbles as they sparkled above the brim of a large amethystine goblet. A pale and delicate Italian boy, sumptuously dressed, the only one of the guests who remained, perceiving that I was fatigued, filled a cup and presented it.

"Right, Septimius," said the debauchee; "make the Jew drink the Emperor's health."

The youth bowed gracefully before me, and again offered the

The Procurator's Story

cup; but the time was not for indulgence, and I laid it on the table.

"Here's long life and glory to Nero Claudius Cæsar, our pious, merciful, and invincible Emperor!" cried Florus, and only when he had drunk to the bottom of the goblet, found leisure to look upon his prisoner.

He either felt or affected surprise, and, turning to his young companion, said: "By Hercules, boy, what grand fellows those Jews make! The helmet is nothing to the turban, after all. What magnificence of beard! No Italian chin has the vigor to grow anything so superb; then the neck, like the bull of Milo; and those blazing eyes! If I had but a legion of such spearsmen——"

I grew impatient and said: "I stand here, procurator, in your bonds. I demand why? I have business that requires my instant attention and I desire to be gone."

"Now have I treated you so inhospitably," said he, laughing, "that you expect I shall finish by shutting my doors upon you at this time of night?" He glanced upon his tablets and read my name. "Aye," said he, "and after I had been so long wishing for the honor of your company. Jew, take your wine and sit down upon that couch, and tell me what brought you to Cæsarea."

I told him briefly the circumstances. He roared with laughter, desired me to repeat them, and swore that "By all the gods! it was the very best piece of pleasantry he had heard since he set foot in Judea." I stood up in irrepressible indignation.

"What!" said he, "will you go without hearing my story in return?"

He filled his goblet again to the brim, buried his purple visage in a vase of roses, and having inhaled the fragrance, and chosen an easy posture, said coldly: "Jew, you have told me a most excellent story, and it is only fair that I should tell you one in return; not half so amusing, I admit, but to the full as true. Jew, you are a traitor!" I started back. "Jew," said he, "you must in common civility hear me out. The truth is, that your visit has been so often

anticipated and so long delayed that I can not bear to part with you yet; you are an apostate; you encourage those Christian dogs. Why does the man stare? You are in communication with rebels, and I might have had the honor of meeting you in the field, if you had not put yourself into my hands in Cæsarea."

The Use of the Rack

He pronounced those words of death in the most tranquil tone; not a muscle moved; the cup which he held brimful in his hand never overflowed.

"Jew," said he, "now be honest, and so far set an example to your nation. Where is the money that has been gathered for this rebellion? You are too sagacious a soldier to think of going to war without the mainspring of the machine."

I scorned to deny the intended insurrection, but "money I had collected none."

"Then," said he, "you are now compelling me to a measure which I do not like. Ho! guard!" A soldier presented himself. "Desire that the rack shall be got ready." The man retired. "You see, Jew, this is all your own doing. Give up the money, and I give up the rack. And the surrender of the coin is asked merely in compassion to yourselves, for without it you can not rebel, and the more you rebel the more you will be beaten."

"Beware, Gessius Florus," I exclaimed; "beware! I am your prisoner, entrapped, as I now see, by a villain, or by the greater villain who corrupted him. You may rack me if you will; you may insult my feelings, tear my flesh, take my life, but for this there shall be retribution. Through Upper Galilee, from Tiberias to the top of Libanus, this act of blood will ring, and be answered by blood. I have kinsmen many, countrymen myriads. A single wrench of my sinews may lift a hundred thousand arms against your city, and leave of yourself nothing but the remembrance of your crimes."

He bounded from his couch; the native fiend flashed out in his countenance. I waited his attack, with my hand on the poniard within my sash. My look probably deterred him, for he flung himself back again, and bursting into a loud laugh, exclaimed:

On to Rome

"Bravely spoken. Septimius, we must send the Jew to Rome, to teach our orators. Aye, I know Upper Galilee too well not to know that rebellion is more easily raised there than the taxes. And it was for that reason that I invited you to come to Cæsarea. In the midst of your tribe, capture would have cost half a legion; here a single jailer will do the business. Ho! guard!" he called aloud.

I heard the screwing of the rack in the next room and unsheathed the poniard. The blade glittered in his eyes. Septimius came between us, and tried to turn the procurator's purpose.

"Let your guard come," cried I, "and by the sacredness of the Temple, one of us dies. I will not live to be tortured, or you shall not live to see it."

If the door had opened, I was prepared to dart upon him.

"Well," said he, after a whispered expostulation from Septimius, "you must go and settle the matter with the Emperor. The fact is, that I am too tender-hearted to govern such a nation of dagger-bearers. So, to Nero! If we can not send the Emperor money, we will at least send him men."

He laughed vehemently at the conception; ordered the singing and dancing slaves to return; called for wine, and plunged again into his favorite cup.

Septimius arose, and led me into another chamber. I remonstrated against the injustice of my seizure. He lamented it, but said that the orders from Rome were strict, and that I was denounced by some of the chiefs in Jerusalem as the head of the late insurrection and the projector of a new one. The procurator, he added, had been for some time anxious to get me into his power without raising a disturbance among my tribe; the treachery of my domestic had been employed to effect this, and "now," concluded he, "my best wish for you —a wish prompted by motives of which you can form no conjecture—is that you may be sent to Rome. Every day that sees you in Cæsarea sees you in the utmost peril. At the first rumor of insurrection, your life will be the sacrifice."

"But my family! What will be their feelings? Can I not at least acquaint them with my destination?"

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"Let your guard come," cried I.

See page 136.

"It is impossible. And now, to let you into a state secret, the Emperor has ordered that you should be sent to Rome. Florus menaced you only to extort money. He now knows you better, and would gladly enlist you in the Roman cause. This I know to be hopeless. But I dread his caprice, and shall rejoice to see the sails hoisted that are to carry you to Rome. Farewell; your family shall have due intelligence." The Hoist of Sails

He was at the door of the chamber, but suddenly returned, and pressing my hand, said again: "Farewell, and remember that neither all Romans, nor even all Greeks, may be alike!" He then with a graceful obeisance left the room.

Fatigue hung with a leaden weight upon my eyelids. I tried vain experiments to keep myself from slumber in this perilous vicinage. The huge silver chandelier, that threw a blaze over the fretted roof, began to twinkle before me; the busts and statues gradually mingled, and I was once more in the land of visions. Home was before my eyes. I was suddenly tossed upon the ocean.

I stood before Nero and was addressing him with a formal harangue, when the whole tissue was broken up by a sullen voice commanding me to rise. A soldier, sword in hand, soon entered; he pointed to the door where an armed party were seen, and informed me that I was ordered for immediate embarkation.

It was scarcely past midnight; the stars were still in their splendor; the pharos threw a long line of flame on the waters; the city sounds were hushed, and silent as a procession to the grave, we moved down to where the tall vessel lay rocking with the breeze. At her side, a Nubian slave put a note into my hand; it was from the young Roman, requesting my acceptance of wine and fruits from the palace, and wishing me a prosperous result to my voyage. The sails were hoisted; the stately mole, that even in the night looked a mount of marble, was cleared; the libation was poured to the Tritons for our speedy passage, and the blazing pharos was rapidly seen but as a twinkling star.

CHAPTER XIX

On Board a Trireme

The Captain of the Trireme

Our trireme flew before the wind. By daybreak the coast was only a pale line along the waters; but Carmel still towered proudly eminent, and with its top alternately clouded and glittering in the sun might have been taken for a gigantic beacon throwing up alternate smoke and flame. With what eyes did I continue to look, until the mighty hill, too, sank in the waters! But thought still lingered on the shore. I saw, with a keenness more than of the eye, the family circle; through many an hour of gazing on the waters, I was all but standing in the midst of those walls which I might never more see; listening to the uncomplaining sighs of Miriam, the impassioned remonstrances of my sole remaining child, and busied in the still harder task of finding out some defense against the self-accusation that laid the charge of rashness and cruelty heavy upon my soul.

But the scene round me was the very reverse of moody meditation. The captain was a thorough Italian trierarch, ostentatious, gay, given to superstition, and occasionally a little of a free thinker. His ship was to him child, wife, and world; and at every maneuver he claimed from us such tribute as a father might for the virtues of his favorite offspring; perpetual luck was in everything that she did; she knew every headland from Cyprus to Ostia; a pilot was a mere supernumerary; she could run the whole course without the helm, if she pleased. She beat the *Liburnian* for speed; the *Cypriot* for comfort; the *Sicilian* for safety; and every other vessel on the seas for every other quality. All he asked was to live in her, while he lived at all, and to go down in her when the Fates were at last to cut his thread, as they did those of all captains, whether on sea or land.

A Motley Crowd

The panegyric of the good ship *Ganymede* was in some degree merited; she carried us on boldly. For a sea in which the winds are constant when they come, but in which the calms are as constant as the winds, nothing could have been more perfectly adapted than the ancient galley. If the gale arose, the ship shot along like the eagle that bore her Trojan namesake—light, strong, with her white sails full of the breeze, and cleaving the surge with the rapidity of an arrow. If the wind fell we floated in a pavilion, screened from the sun, refreshed with perfumes burning on poop, brow, and masts, surrounded with gilding and the carvings and paintings of the Greek artists, drinking delicious wines, listening to song and story, and in all this enjoyment gliding insensibly along on a lake of absolute sapphire encircled and varied by the most picturesque and lovely islands in the world.

The *Ganymede* had been under especial orders from Rome for my transmission; but the captain felt too much respect for the procurator not to trespass on the letter of the law so far as to fill up the vacancies of his hold with merchandise, in which Florus drove a steady contraband trade. Having done so much to gratify the governor's distinguishing propensity, he next provided for his own; and loaded his gallant vessel mercilessly with passengers, as much prohibited as his merchandise. While we were yet in sight of land, I walked a lonely deck; but when the salutary fear of the galleys on the station was passed, every corner of the *Ganymede* let loose a living cargo.

For the Jewish chieftain going from Florus on a mission to the Emperor, as the captain conceived me and my purpose to be, a separate portion of the deck was kept sacred. But I mingled from time to time with the crowd, and thus contrived to preserve at once my respect and my popularity. Never was there a more miscellaneous collection. We transported into Europe a Chaldee sorcerer, an Indian gymnosophist, an Arab teacher of astrology, a Magian from Persepolis, and a Platonist from Alexandria. Such were our contributions to Oriental science.

We had, besides, a dealer in sleight-of-hand from Damascus; an Egyptian with tame monkeys and a model of a pyramid; a

Differences of Opinion

Syrian serpent-teacher; an Idumean maker of amulets against storm and calm, thirst and hunger, and every other disturbance and distress of life; an Armenian discoverer of the stone by which gold-mines were to be found; a Byzantine inventor of the true Oriental pearls; a dealer from the Caspian in gums superseding all that Arabia ever wept; an Epicurean philosopher who professed indolence, and who, to do him justice, was a striking example of his doctrine; and a Stoic who, having gone his rounds of the Roman garrisons as a teacher of dancing, a curer of wines, and a flute-player, had now risen into the easier vocation of a philosopher.

Of course, among these professors, the discoverer of gold was the most moneyless; the maker of amulets against misfortune the most miserable; and the Stoic the most impatient. The Epicurean alone adhered to the spirit of his profession.

But the unstable elements round us were a severe trial for any human philosophy but that of a thorough optimist. Wind and water, the two most imperious of all things, were our masters; and a calm, a breeze, or even a billow, often tried our reasoners too roughly for the honor of tempers so saturated with wisdom. On those occasions the Platonist defended the antiquity of Egypt with double pertinacity; the Chaldee derided its novelty by the addition of a hundred thousand years to his chronology of Babylon; the Indian with increased scorn, wrinkling his brown visage, told them that both Babylon and Egypt were baubles of yesterday compared with the million years of India.

The dagger would have silenced many a discussion on the chief good, the origin of benevolence, and the beauty of virtue, but for the voice of the captain, which like thunder cleared the air. He, I will allow, was the truest philosopher of us all. The trierarch was an unconscious optimist; nothing could touch him in the shape of misfortune, for to him it had no existence. If the storm rose, "we should get the more rapidly into port"; if the calm came to fix us scorching on the face of the waters, "nothing could be safer." If our provisions fell short, "abstemiousness now and then was worth a generation of doctors." If the sun burned above

us with the fire of a ball of red-hot iron, "it was the test of fair weather"; if the sky was a mass of vapor, "we escaped being roasted alive." The philosophy of a Captain

His maxims on higher subjects were equally consoling. "If man had to struggle through life, struggle was the nursing-mother of greatness; if he were opulent, he had gained the end without the trouble. If he had disease, he learned patience, essential for sailor, soldier, and philosopher alike; if he enjoyed health, who could doubt the blessing? If he lived long, he had time for pleasure; if he died early, he escaped the chances of the tables' turning." The optimist applied his principle to me, by gravely informing me that "though it depended on the Emperor's state of digestion whether I should or should not carry back my head from his presence, yet if I lived, I should see the games of the Circus, and if I did not, I should in all probability care but little about the matter."

Nothing in the variety of later Europe gives me a parallel to the distinctions of rank and profession, style of subsistence, and physiognomy of society in the ancient world. Human nature was classed in every kingdom, province, and city almost as rigidly as the different races of mankind. The divisions of the slave, the freedman, the citizen, the artist, the priest, the man of literature, and the man of public life were cut with a plowshare whose furrows were never filled up. Life had the curious mixture of costume, the palpable diversity of purpose, and the studied intricacy of a drama.

Our voyage was rapid, but even a lingering transit would have been cheered by the innumerable objects of beauty and memory which rise on every side in the passage through a Grecian sea. The islands were then untouched by the spoiler; the opulence of Rome had been added to Attic taste; and temples, theaters, and palaces, starting from groves, or studding the sides of the stately hills, and reflected in the mirror of bays, smooth and bright as polished steel, held the eye a continual captive. On the sea, flights of vessels, steering in all directions, glittering with the emblems of their nations, the colored pennants, the painted prows, and gilded images of

The Imperial Fleet

their protecting deities, covered the horizon with life. We had reached the southern cape of Greece, and were, with a boldness unusual to ancient navigation, stretching across in a starless night for the coast of Italy, when we caught a sound of distant music that recalled the poetic dreams of nymphs and tritons. The sound swelled and sank on the wind, as if it came from the depths of the sea or the bosom of the clouds. As we parted from the land, it swelled higher until it filled the midnight with pompous harmony. To sleep was profanation, and we all gathered on the deck, exhausting nature and art in conjectures of the cause.

The harmony approached and receded at intervals, grew in volume and richness, then stole away in wild murmurs, to revive with still more luxuriant sweetness. Night passed in delight and conjecture. Morning alone brought the solution.

Full in the blaze of sunrise steered the imperial fleet, returning in triumph from the Olympic games, with the Emperor on board. We had unconsciously approached it during the darkness.

The whole scene wore the aspect of a vision summoned by the hand of an enchanter. The sea was covered with the fleet in order of battle. Some of the galleys were of vast size, and all were gleaming with gold and decorations; silken sails, garlands on the masts, trophies hung over the sides, and embroidered streamers of every shape and hue, met the morning light. We passed the wing of the fleet, close enough to see the sacrificial fires on the poop of the imperial quinquereme. A crowd in purple and military habits was standing round a throne, above which proudly waved the scarlet flag of command. A figure advanced; all foreheads were bowed, acclamations rent the air, the trumpets of the fleet flourished, and the lofty harmonies that had charmed us in the night again swelled upon the wind and followed us, long after the whole floating splendor had dissolved into the distant blue.

At length the headlands of the noble bay of Tarentum rose above the horizon. While we were running with the speed of a lapwing, the captain, to our surprise, shortened sail. I soon discovered that no philosophy was perfect; that even the

optimist thought that daylight might be worse than useless, and that a blot had been left on creation in the shape of a custom-house officer. Salathiel Lamb

Night fell at last; the moon, to which our captain had taken a sudden aversion, was as cloudy as he could desire, and we rushed in between the glimmering watch-towers on the Iapygian and Lacinian promontories. The glow of light along the waters soon pointed out where the luxurious citizens of Tarentum were enjoying the banquet in their barges and villas. Next came the hum of the great city, whose popular boast was, like that of later times, that it had more festivals than days in the year.

But the trierarch's often-told delight at finding himself free to rove among the indulgences of his favorite shore had lost its poignancy; and with a firmness which set the Stoic in a rage, the Epicurean in a state of rebellion, and the whole tribe of our sages in a temper of mere mortal remonstrance, he resisted alike the remonstrance and the allurement, and sullenly cast anchor in the center of the bay.

It was not until song and feast had died, and all was hushed, that he stole with the slightest possible noise to the back of the mole, and sending us below, disburdened his conscience and the hold of the good ship *Ganymede*. I had no time to give to the glories of Tarentum. Nero's approach hurried my departure. The centurion who had me in charge trembled at the idea of delay, and we rode through the midst of three hundred thousand sleepers in streets of marble and ranks of statues, as silently and swiftly as if we had been the ghosts of their ancestors.

When the day broke we found ourselves among the Lucanian hills, then no desert, but crowded with population and bright with the memorials of Italian opulence and taste. From the inn where we halted to change horses, the Tarentine gulf spread broad and bold before the eye.

The city of luxury and of power, once the ruler of Southern Italy, and mistress of the seas that sent out armies and fleets, worthy to contest the supremacy with Pyrrhus and the Carthaginian, was, from this spot, sunk like all the works of man,

In Rome

into littleness. But the gulf, like all the works of nature, grew in grandeur. Its circular shore edged with thirteen cities, the deep azure of its smooth waters inlaid with the flashes of sunrise, and traversed by fleets, diminished to toys, reminded me of one of the magnificent Roman shields, with its center of sanguine steel, the silver incrustation of the rim, and the storied sculpture. We passed at full speed through the Lucanian and Samnian provinces, fine sweeps of cultivated country, interspersed with the hunting-grounds of the great patricians; forests that had not felt the ax for centuries, and hills and valleys sheeted with the vine and rose.

But on reaching the border of Latium, I was already in Rome; I traveled a day's journey among streets and in the midst of a crowded and hurrying population. The whole was one huge suburb with occasional glimpses of a central mount, crowned with glittering and gilded structures.

"There!" said the centurion, with somewhat of religious reverence, "behold the eternal Capitol!"

I entered Rome at night, passing through an endless number of narrow and intricate streets where hovels, the very abode of want, were mingled with palaces blazing with lights and echoing with festivity. The centurion's house was at length reached. He showed me to an apartment, and left me, saying, "that I must prepare to be brought before the Emperor immediately on his arrival."

I am now, thought I, in the heart of the heart of the world; in the midst of that place of power from which the destiny of nations issues; in the great treasure-house to which men come from the ends of the earth for knowledge, for justice, for wealth, honor, thrones! And what am I?—a solitary slave!

CHAPTER XX

The Burning of Rome

Roman Pageantry

WITH the original mixture of Ionian and northern blood in his veins, the character of the Roman was at once tasteful and barbarian. Like the Asiatic, delighting in luxury, like the Tatar, delighting in gore, he turned the elegance of the Greek games into the combat of gladiators. He was a voluptuary, but the gravest of all voluptuaries. Of all nations the Roman bore the strongest resemblance to that people of conquerors who at length swept its name from Byzantium; superb, but slavish; fierce, but sensual; brave as the lion, but base in its appetites as the jackal; a people made for the possession of empire and for its corruption."

Of all men he had the least resemblance to his successor. Haughty, sagacious, and solemn, tho ravening for rapine, and merciless in his revenge, he bequeathed nothing to that miscellany of mankind which has followed him, but his passion for shows.

Rome was all shows. Its innumerable public events were all thrown into the shape of pageantry. Its worship, elections, the departure and return of governors and consuls, every operation of public life, was modeled into a pomp, and in the boundless extent of the empire those operations were crowding on one another every day. The multitude that can still be set in motion by a wooden saint was then summoned by the stirring ceremonial of empire, the actual sovereignty of the globe. What must have been the strong excitement, the perpetual concourse, the living and various activity of a city from which flowed the stream of power through the world, to return to it loaded with all that the opulence, skill, and splendor of the world could give.

Triumphs to whose grandeur and singularity the pomps of

Summoned Before the Emperor

later days are but as the attempts of paupers and children; rites on which the very existence of the state was to depend; the levy and march of armies which were to carry fate to the remotest corners of the earth; the kings of the East and West coming to solicit diadems or to deprecate the irresistible wrath of Rome; vast theaters; public games that tasked the whole fertility of Roman talent, and the most prodigal lavishness of imperial luxury, were the movers that among the four millions of Rome made life a hurricane.

I saw it in its full and grand commotion; I saw it in its desperate agony; I saw it in its frivolous revival, and I shall see it in an hour, wilder, weaker, and more terrible than all. I remained under the charge of the centurion. No man could be better fitted for a state jailer. Civility sat on his lips, but caution the most profound sat beside her. He professed to have the deepest dependence on my honor, yet he never let me move beyond his eye. But I had no desire to escape. The crisis must come, and I was as well inclined to meet it then as to have it lingering over me.

Intelligence in a few days arrived from Brundusium of the Emperor's landing, and of his intention to remain at Antium until his triumphal entry should be prepared. My fate now hung in the balance. I was ordered to attend the imperial presence. At the vestibule of the Antian palace my careful centurion deposited me in the hands of a senator.

As I followed him through the halls, a young female richly attired, and of the most beautiful face and form, crossed us, light and graceful as a dancing nymph. The senator bowed profoundly. She beckoned to him and they exchanged a few words. I was probably the subject, for her countenance, sparkling with the animation of youth and loveliness, grew pale at once; she clasped both her hands upon her eyes and rushed into an inner chamber. She knew Nero well; and dearly she was yet to pay for her knowledge.

The senator, to my inquiring glance, answered in a whisper, "The Empress Poppæa."

A few steps onward and I stood in the presence of the most formidable being on earth. Yet whatever might have been

my natural agitation at the time, I could scarcely restrain a smile at the first sight of Nero."

Nero the Tyrant

I saw a pale, undersized, light-haired young man, sitting before a table with a lyre on it, and a parrot's cage, to whose inmate he was teaching Greek with great assiduity. But for the regal furniture of the cabinet I should have supposed myself led by mistake into an interview with some struggling poet. He shot round one quick glance on the opening of the door, and then proceeded to give lessons to his bird. I had leisure to gaze on the tyrant and parricide.

Physiognomy is a true science. The man of profound thought, the man of active ability, and, above all, the man of genius has his character stamped on his countenance by nature; the man of violent passions and the voluptuary have it stamped by habit. But the science has its limits: it has no stamp for mere cruelty. The features of the human monster before me were mild and almost handsome; a heavy eye and a figure tending to fulness gave the impression of a quiet mind, and but for an occasional restlessness of brow and a brief glance from under it, in which the leaden eye darted suspicion, I should have pronounced Nero one of the most indolently harmless of mankind.

He now remanded his pupil to its perch, took up the lyre, and throwing a not unskilful hand over the strings in the intervals of his performance, languidly addressed a broken sentence to me.

"You have come, I understand, from Judea; they tell me that you have been, or are to be, a general of the insurrection. You must be put to death; your countrymen give me a great deal of trouble, and I always regret to be troubled with them. But to send you back would be only an encouragement to them, and to keep you here among strangers would be only a cruelty to you. I am charged with cruelty; you see the charge is not true. I am lampooned every day; I know the scribblers, but they must lampoon or starve and I leave them to do both. Have you brought any news from Judea? They have not had a true prince there since the first Herod and he was quite a Greek, a cut-throat and a man of

The Escape

taste. He understood the arts. I sent for you to see what sort of animal a Jewish rebel was. Your dress is handsome, but too light for our winters. You can not die before sunset, as until then I am engaged with my music-master. We all must die when our time comes. Farewell—till sunset may Jupiter protect you!"

I retired to execution, and before the door closed heard this accomplished disposer of life and death preluding upon his lyre with increased energy. I was conducted to a turret until the period in which the Emperor's engagement with his music-master should leave him at leisure to see me die!

Yet there was kindness even under the roof of Nero, and a liberal hand had covered the table in my cell. The hours passed heavily along, but they passed; and I was watching the last rays of my last sun when I suddenly perceived a cloud rise in the direction of Rome. It grew broader, deeper, darker as I gazed; its center was suddenly tinged with red; the tinge spread; the whole mass of cloud became crimson; the sun went down, and another sun seemed to have risen in its stead. I heard the clattering of horses' feet in the courtyards below; trumpets sounded; there was evident confusion in the palace; the troops hurried under arms, and I saw a squadron of cavalry set off at full speed.

As I was gazing on the spectacle before me, which perpetually became more menacing, the door of my cell slowly opened, and a masked figure stood upon the threshold. I had made up my mind, and demanding if he were the executioner, told him "I was ready." The figure paused, listened to the sounds below, and after looking for a while on the troops in the courtyard, signified by signs that I had a chance of saving my life.

The love of existence rushed back upon me; I eagerly inquired what was to be done. He drew from under his cloak the dress of a Roman slave, which I put on, and noiselessly followed his steps through a long succession of small and strangely intricate passages. We found no difficulty from guards or domestics. The whole palace was in a state of extraordinary alarm. Every human being was packing up

something or other; rich vases, myrrhine cups, gold services, were lying in heaps on the floors; books, costly dresses, instruments of music, all the appendages of luxury, were flung loose in every direction—signs of the sudden breaking up of the court. I might have plundered the value of a province with impunity. Still we wound our hurried way. In passing along one of the corridors, the voice of sorrow struck the ear; my mysterious guide hesitated; I glanced through the slab of crystal that showed the chamber within.

Rome Aflame

It was the one in which I had seen the Emperor, but his place was now filled by the form of youth and beauty which had crossed me on my arrival. She was weeping bitterly," and reading with passionate indignation a long list of names, probably one of those rolls in which Nero registered his intended victims, and which in the haste of departure he had left open. A second glance saw her tear the paper into a thousand fragments and scatter them in the fountain that gushed upon the floor. I left this lovely and unhappy creature, this dove in the vulture's talons, with almost a pang. A few steps more brought us into the open air, but among bowers that covered our path with darkness. At the extremity of the gardens my guide struck with his dagger upon a door; it was opened; we found horses outside; he sprang on one; I sprang on its fellow, and palace, guards, and death were left far behind.

He galloped so furiously that I found it impossible to speak, and it was not till we had reached an eminence a few miles from Rome, where we breathed our horses, that I could ask to whom I had been indebted for my escape. But I could not extract a word from him. He made signs of silence and pointed with wild anxiety to the scene that spread below. It was of a grandeur and terror indescribable. Rome was an ocean of flame! Height and depth were covered with red surges that rolled before the blast like an endless tide. The flames burst up the sides of the hills, which they turned into instant volcanoes, exploding volumes of smoke and fire; then plunged into the depths in a hundred glowing cataracts; then climbed and consumed again. The distant sound of the great

The Progress of Destruction

city in her convulsion went to the soul. The air was filled with the steady roar of the advancing blaze, the crash of falling houses, and the hideous outcry of the myriads flying through the streets, or surrounded and perishing in the conflagration.

Hostile to Rome as I was, I could not restrain the exclamation: "There goes the fruit of conquest, the glory of ages, the purchase of the blood of millions! Was vanity made for man?" My guide continued looking forward with intense earnestness, as if he were perplexed by what avenue to enter the burning city. I demanded who he was, and whither he would lead me. He returned no answer. A long spire of flame that shot up from a hitherto-untouched quarter engrossed all his senses. He struck in the spur, and making a wild gesture to me to follow, darted down the hill.

I pursued; we found the Appian choked with wagons, baggage of every kind, and terrified crowds hurrying into the open country. To force a way through them was impossible. All was clamor, violent struggle, and helpless death. Men and women of the highest rank were hurrying on foot, or trampled by the rabble that had then lost all respect of condition. One dense mass of miserable life, irresistible from its weight, crushed by the narrow streets and scorched by the flames over their heads, continued to roll through the gates like an endless stream of black lava.

We now turned back and attempted an entrance through the gardens of some of the villas that skirted the city wall near the Palatine. All were deserted, and after some dangerous bounds over the burning ruins we found ourselves in the streets. The fire had originally broken out on the Palatine, and hot smoke that wrapped and half-blinded us hung thick as night upon the wrecks of pavilions and palaces; but the dexterity and knowledge of my inexplicable guide carried us on. It was in vain that I insisted upon knowing the purpose of this terrible traverse. He pressed his hand on his heart in reassurance of his fidelity, and still spurred on.

We now passed under the shade of an immense range of lofty buildings, whose gloomy and solid strength seemed to

bid defiance to chance and time. A sudden scream appalled me. In the Arena

A ring of fire swept round its summit; burning cordage, sheets of canvas, and a shower of all things combustible flew into the air above our heads. An uproar followed, unlike all that I had ever heard, a hideous mixture of howls, shrieks, and groans. The flames rolled down the narrow street before us and made the passage next to impossible. While we hesitated, a huge fragment of the building heaved, as if in an earthquake, and fortunately for us fell inward. The whole scene of terror was then open.

The great amphitheater of Statilius Taurus had caught fire; the stage with its inflammable furniture was blazing below. The flames were wheeling up, circle above circle, through the seventy thousand seats that rose from the ground to the roof. I stood in unspeakable awe and wonder on the side of this colossal cavern, this mighty temple of the city of fire. At length a descending blast cleared away the smoke that covered the arena. The cause of those horrid cries was now visible. The wild beasts kept for the games had broken from their dens. Maddened by affright and pain, lions, tigers, panthers, wolves, whole herds of the monsters of India and Africa, were enclosed in an impassable barrier of fire. They bounded, they fought, they screamed, they tore; they ran howling round and round the circle; they made desperate leaps upward through the blaze; when flung back, they fell, only to fasten their fangs in each other, and with their parching jaws bathed in blood, die raging.

I looked anxiously to see whether any human being was involved in this fearful catastrophe; but to my relief, I could see none. The keepers and attendants had obviously escaped. As I expressed my gladness I was startled by a loud cry from my guide, the first sound that I had heard him utter. He pointed to the opposite side of the amphitheater. There indeed sat an object of melancholy interest—a man who had either been unable to escape or had determined to die. Escape was now impossible. He sat in desperate calmness on his funeral pile. He was a gigantic Ethiopian

Mamartine, the Roman prison

slave, entirely naked. He had chosen his place, as if in mockery, on the imperial throne; the fire was above him and around him, and under this tremendous canopy he gazed without the movement of a muscle on the combat of the wild beasts below, a solitary sovereign, with the whole tremendous game played for himself, and inaccessible to the power of man.

I was forced away from this absorbing spectacle, and we once more threaded the long and intricate streets of Rome. As we approached the end of one of those bewildering passages, scarcely wide enough for us to ride abreast, I was startled by the sudden illumination of the sky immediately above, and, rendered cautious by the experience of our hazards, called to my companion to return. He pointed behind me and showed the fire breaking out in the houses by which we had just galloped. I followed on. A crowd that poured from the adjoining streets cut off our retreat. Hundreds rapidly mounted on the houses in front, in the hope by throwing them down to check the conflagration The obstacle once removed, we saw the source of the light—spectacle of horror! The great prison of Rome, the Mamartine, was on fire.

Never can I forget the sights and sounds—the dismay—the hopeless agony—the fury and frenzy that then overwhelmed all hearts. The jailers had been forced to fly before they could loose the fetters or open the cells of the prisoners. We saw those gaunt and wo-begone wretches crowding to their casements, and imploring impossible help; clinging to the heated bars; toiling with their impotent grasp to tear out the massive stones; some hopelessly wringing their hands; some calling on the terrified spectators, by every name of humanity, to save them; some venting their despair in execrations and blasphemies that made the blood run cold; others, after many a wild effort to break loose, dashing their heads against the walls or stabbing themselves. The people gave them outcry for outcry, but the flame forbade approach. Before I could extricate myself from the multitude, a whirl of fiery ashes shot upward from the falling roof; the walls burst into a thousand fragments, and the huge prison, with all its miserable inmates, was a heap of embers!

Through Increasing Misery

Exhausted as I was by this endless fatigue and yet more by the melancholy sights that surrounded every step, no fatigue seemed to be felt by the singular being who governed my movements. He sprang through the burning ruins; he plunged into the sulfurous smoke; he never lost the direction that he had first taken; and tho baffled and forced to turn back a hundred times, he again rushed on his track with the directness of an arrow. For me to make my way back to the gates would be even more difficult than to push forward. My ultimate safety might be in following, and I followed. To stand still and to move seemed equally perilous.

The streets, even with the improvements of Augustus, were still scarcely wider than the breadth of the little Volscian carts that crowded them. They were crooked, long, and obstructed by every impediment of a city built in haste after the burning by the Gauls, and with no other plan than the caprice of its hurried tenantry. The houses were of immense height, chiefly wood, many roofed with thatch, and all covered or cemented with pitch. The true surprise is that it had not been burned once a year from the time of its building. Nero, that hereditary concentration of vice, of whose ancestor's yellow beard the Roman orator said, "No wonder that his beard was brass, when his mouth was iron and his heart lead," the parricide and the poisoner, might plausibly exonerate himself of an act which might have been the deed of a drunken mendicant in any of the fifty thousand hovels of this gigantic aggregate of everything that could turn to flame.

We passed along through all the horrid varieties of misery, guilt, and riot that could find their place in a great public calamity; groups gazing in wo on the wreck of their fortunes in vapor and fire; groups plundering in the midst of the flame; crowds of rioters, escaped felons, and murderers, exulting in the public ruin, and dancing and drinking with Bacchanalian uproar; gangs of robbers stabbing the fugitives, to strip them; revenge, avarice, despair, profligacy, let loose naked; undisguised demons, to swell the wretchedness of this tremendous infliction upon a blood-covered empire.

Still we spurred on, but our jaded horses at length sank

The Palace in Flame

under us; and leaving them to find their way into the fields, we struggled forward on foot. The air had hitherto been calm, but now gusts began to rise, thunder growled, and the signs of tempest increased. We had gained an untouched quarter of the city, and had pushed our weary passage up to the gates of a large patrician palace, when we were startled by a broad sheet of flame rushing through the sky. The storm had come in its rage.

The range of public magazines of wood, cordage, tar, and oil, in the valley between the Cœlian and Palatine hills, had at length been involved in the conflagration. All that we had seen before was darkness to the fierce splendor of this burning. The tempest tore off the roofs and swept them like floating islands of fire through the sky. The most distant quarters on which they fell were instantly wrapped in flame. One broad mass, whirling from an immense height, broke upon the palace before us. A cry of terror was heard within. The gates were flung open, and a crowd of domestics and persons of both sexes, attired for a banquet, poured into the streets. The palace was wrapped in flame.

My guide then for the first time lost his self-possession. He staggered toward me with the appearance of a man who had received a spear-head in his bosom. I caught him before he fell, but his head sank, his knees bent under him, and his white lips quivered with unintelligible sounds. I could distinguish only the words—"Gone, gone forever!"

The flames had already seized upon the principal floors of the palace, and the volumes of smoke that poured through every window and entrance rendered the attempt to save those still within a work of extreme hazard. But ladders were rapidly placed, ropes were flung, and the activity of the attendants and retainers was boldly exerted, until all were presumed to have been saved and the building was left to burn. My overwhelmed guide was lying on the ground when a sudden scream was heard, and a figure in the robes and with the rosy crown of a banquet—strange contrast to her fearful situation—was seen flying from window to window in the upper part of the mansion. It was supposed that she had fainted

in the first terror and been forgotten. The height, the fierceness of the flame, which now completely mastered resistance, the volumes of smoke that suffocated every man who approached, made the chance of saving this unfortunate being utterly desperate in the opinion of the multitude.

Salathiel Finds Salome

I shuddered at the horrors of this desertion. I looked round at my companion; he was kneeling in helpless agony, with his hands lifted up to heaven. Another scream, wilder than ever, pierced my senses. I seized an ax from one of the domestics, caught a ladder from another, and in a paroxysm of hope, fear, and pity scaled the burning wall. A shout from below followed me.

I entered at the first window that I could reach. All before me was cloud. I rushed on, struggled, stumbled over furniture and fragments of all kinds; fell, rose again, found myself trampling upon precious things, plate and crystal; and still, ax in hand, forced my way. I at length reached the apartment where I had seen the figure. It had vanished!

A strange superstition of childhood, a thought that I might have been lured by some spirit of evil into this place of ruin, suddenly came over me. I stopped to gather my faculties. I leaned against one of the pillars—it was hot; the floor shook and cracked under my tread; the walls heaved, the flame hissed below, while overhead roared the whirlwind and burst the thunder-peal.

My brain was fevered by agitation and fatigue. The golden lamps still burning; the long tables disordered, yet glittering with the ornaments of patrician luxury; the Tyrian couches; the scarlet canopy that covered the whole range of the tables, and gave the hall the aspect of an imperial pavilion, partially torn down in the confusion of the flight, all assumed to me a horrid and bewildering splendor. The smoke was already rising through the crevices of the floor; a huge volume of yellow vapor slowly wreathed and arched round the chair at the head of the banquet-table. I could have imaged a fearful lord of the feast under that cloudy veil. Everything round me was marked with preternatural fear, magnificence, and ruin.

A low groan broke my reverie. I heard the broken words:

Pursued by fire

"Oh, bitter fruit of disobedience! Oh, my father! oh, my mother! shall I never see you again? For one crime I am doomed. Eternal mercy, let my crime be washed away! Let my spirit ascend pure! Farewell, mother, sister, father, husband!"

With the last word I heard a fall, as if the spirit had left the body.

I sprang toward the sound—I met but the solid wall. "Horrible illusion!" I cried. "Am I mad, or the victim of the powers of darkness?"

I tore away the hangings—a door was before me. I burst it through with a blow of the ax, and saw stretched on the floor, and insensible—Salome!

I caught my child in my arms; I bathed her forehead with my tears; I besought her to look up, to give some sign of life, to hear the full forgiveness of my breaking heart. She looked not, answered not, breathed not. To make a last effort for her life, I carried her into the banquet-room. But the fire had forced its way there; the storm had carried the flame through the long galleries, and spires of lurid light already darting through the doors, gave fearful evidence that the last stone of the palace must soon go down.

I bore my unhappy daughter toward the window, but the height was deadly; no gesture could be seen through the piles of smoke; the help of man was in vain. To my increased misery, the current of air revived Salome at the instant when I hoped that by insensibility she would escape the final pang. She breathed, stood and opening her eyes, fixed on me the vacant stare of one scarcely roused from sleep. Still clasped in my arms she gazed again, but my wild face, covered with dust, my half-burned hair, the ax gleaming in my hand, terrified her; she uttered a scream and darted away from me, headlong into the center of the burning. I rushed after her, calling on her name. A column of fire shot up between us; I felt the floor sink; all was then suffocation—I struggled and fell.

CHAPTER XXI

The Death of a Martyr

I AWOKE with a sensation of pain in every limb. A female voice was singing a faint song near me. But the past was like a dream. I involuntarily looked down for the gulf on which I had trod; I looked upward for the burning rafters. I saw nothing but an earthen floor and a low roof hung with dried grapes and herbs. I uttered a cry. The singer approached me. There was nothing in her aspect to nurture a diseased imagination; she was an old and emaciated creature who yet rejoiced in my restoration. She in turn called her husband, a venerable Jew, whose first act was to offer thanksgiving to the God of Israel for the safety of a chief of His nation. But to my inquiries for the fate of my child, he could give no answer; he had discovered me among the ruins of the palace of the Æmilii, to which he, with many of his countrymen, had been attracted, with the object of collecting whatever remnants of furniture might be left by the flames. I had fallen by the edge of a fountain which extinguished the fire in its vicinage, and I was found breathing. During three days I had lain insensible. The Jew now went out and brought back with him some of the elders of our people, who, notwithstanding the decree of the Emperor Claudius, had remained in Rome, tho in increased privacy. I was carried to their house of assemblage, concealed among groves and vineyards beyond the gates, and attended to with a care which might cure all things but the wounds of the mind. On the great object of my solicitude, the fate of my Salome, I could obtain no relief. I wandered over the site of the palace; it was now a mass of ashes and charcoal; its ruins had been probed by hundreds; but search for even a trace of what would have been to me dearer than a mountain of gold, was in vain.

The Return to Consciousness

The Cry for Revenge

The conflagration continued for six days, and every day of the number gave birth to some monstrous report of its origin. Of the fourteen districts of Rome, but four remained. Thousands had lost their lives, tens of thousands were utterly undone; the whole empire shook under the blow. Then came the still deeper horror.

Fear makes the individual feeble, but it makes the multitude ferocious. A universal cry arose for revenge. Great public misfortunes give the opportunity that the passions of men and sects love, and the fiercest crimes of selfishness are justified under the name of retribution.

But the full calamity burst on the Christians, then too new to have fortified themselves in the national prejudices, if they would have suffered the alliance; too poor to reckon on any powerful protectors; and too uncompromising to palliate their scorn of the whole public system of morals, philosophy, and religion. The Emperor, the priesthood, and the populace conspired against them, and they were ordered to the slaughter.

I too had my stimulants to hatred. Where was I? In exile, in desperate hazard; I had been torn from home, robbed of my child, made miserable by the fear of apostasy in my house; and by whom was this comprehensive evil done? The name of Christian was gall to me. I heard of the popular vengeance, and called it justice; I saw the distant fires in which the Christians were being consumed, and calculated how many each night of those horrors would subtract from the guilty number. Man becomes cruel by the sight of cruelty, and when thousands and hundreds of thousands were shouting for vengeance; when every face looked fury, and every tongue was wild with some new accusation; when the great and the little, the philosopher and the ignorant, raised up one roar of reprobation against the Christian, was the solitary man of mercy to be looked for in one bleeding from head to foot with wrongs irreparable?

On one of those dreadful nights, I was gazing from the housetop on the fire forcing its way through the remaining quarters, the melancholy gleams through the country showing the extent of the flight, and in the midst of the blackened and

dreary wastes of Rome, the spots of livid flame where the Christians were perishing at the pile, when I was summoned to a consultation below. Preparation for Execution

A Jew had just brought an imperial edict proclaiming pardon of all offenses to the discoverer of Christians. I would not have purchased my life by the life of a dog. But my safety was important to the Jewish cause, and I was pressed on every side by arguments on the wisdom, nay, the public duty, of accepting freedom on any terms. And what was to be the price?—the life of criminals long obnoxious to the laws and now stained beyond mercy. I loathed delay; I loathed Rome; I was wild to return to the great cause of my country, which never could have a fairer hope than now. An emissary was sent out; money soon effected the discovery of a Christian assemblage; I appeared before the prætor with my documents, and brought back in my hand the imperial pardon, given with the greater good will as the assemblage chanced to comprehend the chiefs of the heresy. They were seized, ordered forthwith to the pile, and I was commanded to be present at this completion of my national service.

The executions were in the gardens of the imperial palace, which had been thrown open by Nero for the double purpose of popularity and of indulging himself with the display of death at the slightest personal inconvenience. The crowd was prodigious, and to gratify the greatest possible number at once, those murders were carried on in different parts of the gardens. In the vineyard, a certain portion were to be crucified; in the orangery, another portion were to be burned; in the pleasure-ground, another portion were to be torn by lions and tigers; gladiators were to be let loose, and when the dusk came on, the whole of the space was to be lighted by human torches, Christians wrapped in folds of linen covered with pitch and bitumen, and thus burning down from the head to the ground.

I was horror-struck, but escape was now impossible, and I must go through the whole hideous round. With my flesh quivering, my ears ringing, my eyes dim, I was forced to see miserable beings, men—nay women, nay infants—sewed up in skins of beasts, and hunted and torn to pieces by dogs; old

A Christian Martyr

men, whose hoary hairs might have demanded reverence of savages, scourged, racked, and nailed to the trees to die; lovely young females, creatures of guileless hearts and innocent beauty, flung on flaming scaffolds. And this was the work of man, civilized man, in the highest civilization of the arts, the manners, and the learning of the pagan world!

But the grand display was prepared for the time when those Christians who had been denounced on my discovery were to be executed; an exhibition at which the Emperor himself announced his intention to be present. The great Circus was no more, but a temporary amphitheater had been erected, in which the usual games were exhibited during the early part of the day. At the hour of my arrival, the low bank circling this immense enclosure was filled with the first names of Rome—knights, patricians, senators, military tribunes, consuls; the Emperor alone was wanting to complete the representative majesty of the empire. I was to form a part of the ceremony, and the guard who had me in charge cleared the way to a conspicuous place, where my national dress fixed every eye on me. Several Christians had perished before my arrival. Their remains lay on the ground, and in their midst stood the man who was to be the next victim." By what influence I know not, but never did I see a human being who made on me so deep an impression. I have him before me at this instant.

The victims had been generally offered life for recantation, and this man was giving his reply. I see the figure: low, yet with an air of nobleness; stooped a little with venerable age, but the countenance full of life, and marked with all the traits of intellectual power; the strongly aquiline nose, the bold lip, the large and rapid eye; the whole man conveying the idea of an extraordinary permanence of early vigor under the weight of labor or of years. Even the hair was thick and black, with scarcely a touch of silver. If the place and time were Athens and the era of Demosthenes, I should have said that Demosthenes stood before me. The vivid action; the flashing rapidity with which he seized a new idea, and compressed it to his purpose; the impetuous argument that, throwing off the for-

mality of logic, smote with the strength of a new fact, were Demosthenic. Even a certain infirmity of utterance, and an occasional slight difficulty of words, added to the likeness; but there was a hallowed glance and a solemn yet tender reach of thought interposed among those intense appeals that asserted the sacred superiority of the subject and the man. He was already speaking when I reached the scene of terrors. I can give but an outline of his language. The Christis Speaks

He pointed to the headless bodies round him.

"For what have these my brethren died? Answer me, priests of Rome; what temple did they force—what altar overthrow—what insults offer to the slightest of your public celebrations? Judges of Rome, what offense did they commit against the public peace? Consuls, where were they found in rebellion against the Roman majesty? People of Rome, whom among your thousands can charge one of these holy dead with extortion, impurity, or violence; can charge them with anything but the patience that bore wrong without a murmur, and the charity that answered tortures only by prayer?"

He then touched upon the nature of his faith.

"Do I stand here demanding to be believed for opinions? No, but for facts. I have seen the sick made whole, the lame walk, the blind receive their sight, by the mere name of Him whom you crucified. I have seen men, once ignorant of all languages but their own, speaking with the language of every nation under heaven; the still greater wonder of the timid defying all fear, the unlearned instantly made wise in the mysteries of things divine and human, the peasant putting to shame the learned—awing the proud, enlightening the darkened; alike in the courts of kings, before the furious people, and in the dungeon, armed with an irrepressible spirit of knowledge, reason, and truth that confounded their adversaries. I have seen the still greater wonder of the renewed heart; the impure suddenly abjuring vice; the covetous, the cruel, the faithless, the godless, gloriously changed into the holy, the gentle, the faithful, worshipers of the true God in spirit and in truth—the conquest of the passions which defied

The Faith of a Christian

your philosophers, your tribunals, your rewards, and your terrors, achieved in the one mighty name. Those are facts, things which I have seen with these eyes; and who that had seen them could doubt that the finger of God was there? Dared I refuse my belief to the divine mission of the Being by whom, and even in memory of whom, things baffling the proudest human means were wrought before my senses? Irresistibly compelled by facts to believe that Christ was sent by God, I was with equal force compelled to believe in the doctrines declared by that glorious revealer of the King alike of quick and dead. And thus I stand before you this day, at the close of a long life of labor and love, a Christian."

This appeal to the understanding, divested as it was of all studied ornament, was listened to by the immense multitude with the most unbroken interest. It was delivered with the strong simplicity of conviction. He then spoke of the Founder of his faith.

"Men may be insane for opinions, but who can be insane for facts? The coming of Christ was prophesied a thousand years before! From the beginning of His ministry, He lived wholly before the eyes of mankind. His life corresponds with the prophecies in circumstances totally beyond human conjecture, contrivance, or power. The Virgin Mother, the village in which He was born, the lowliness of His cradle, the worship paid to Him there, the hazard of His life—all were predicted. Could the infant have shaped the accomplishment of those predictions? The death that He should die, the hands by which it was to be inflicted, even the draft that He should drink, the raiment that He should be clothed in, and the sepulcher in which He should be laid, were predicted. Could the man have shaped their accomplishment? The time of His resting in the tomb, His resurrection, His ascent to heaven, the sending of the Holy Spirit after He was gone—all were predicted; all were beyond human collusion, human power, even beyond human thought; all were accomplished! Is not here the finger of God?

"Those things, too, were universally known to the nation most competent to detect collusion. Did Christ come to

Rome, where every new religion finds adherents, and where all pretensions might be advanced without fear; where a deceiver might have quoted prophecies that never existed, and vaunted of wonders done where there was no eye to detect them? No! His life was spent in Judea. He made His appeal to the Scriptures, in a country where they were in the hands of the nation. His miracles were brought before the eyes of a priesthood that watched him step by step; His doctrines were spoken, not to the mingled multitude holding a thousand varieties of opinion, and careless of all, but to an exclusive race, subtle in their inquiries, eager in their zeal, and proud of their peculiar possession of divine knowledge. Christ, the Crucified

"Yet against His life, His miracles, or His doctrine, what charge could they bring? None. There is not a single stigma on the purity of His conduct; the power of His wonder-working control over man and nature; the holiness, wisdom, and grandeur of His views of Providence; the truth, charity, and meekness of His counsels to man. Their single source of hatred was the pride of worldly hearts, that expected a king where they were to have found a teacher.

"Their single charge against Him was His prophecy that there should be an end to their Temple and their state within the life of man.

"They crucified Him; He died in prayer, that His murderers might be forgiven; and His prayer was mightily answered. He had scarcely risen to His eternal throne when thousands believed and were forgiven. To Him be the glory, forever and ever!"

All this was heard in wonder. I could see eyes lifted to heaven, and lips as if moved in prayer.

"Compare Him with your legislators. He gives the spirit of all law in a single sentence: 'Do unto others as you would they should do unto you.' Compare Him with your priesthood. He gives a single prayer, containing the substance of all that man can rationally implore of heaven. Compare Him with your moralists. He lays the foundation of virtue in love to God! Compare him with your sages. He leads a life of privation without a murmur; He dies a death of shame,

A face inspired

desertion, and agony, and His last breath is mercy! Compare Him with your conquerors. Without the shedding of a drop of blood He has already conquered hosts that would have resisted all the swords of earth; hosts of stubborn passions, cherished vices, guilty perversions of the powers and faculties of man. In proof of all, look on these glorious dead, whom I shall join before the set of yonder sun. Yes, martyrs of God! ye were His conquests, and ye too are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us and gave Himself for us. But a triumph shall come, magnificent and terrible, when all eyes shall behold Him, and the tribes of the earth, even they who pierced Him, shall mourn."

Some raged, more listened, many wept. He spoke with still loftier energy.

"Then rejoice, ye dead! for ye shall rise; ye shall be clothed with glory; ye shall be as the angels, bright and powerful, immortal, intellectual kings! 'For tho worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.'"

He paused, as if he saw the vision.

The sky was cloudless; the sun was in the west, but shining in his broadest beams; the whole space before me was flooded with light; when, as I gazed upon the martyr, I saw a gleam issue from his upturned face; it increased to brightness, to radiance, to an intense luster that made the sunlight utterly pale. All was astonishment in the amphitheater, all was awe. The old man seemed unconscious of the wonder that invested him. He continued with his open hands lifted up and his eyes fixed on heaven. The glory spread over his form, and he stood before us robed in an effulgence which shot from him, like a living fount of splendor, round the colossal circle. Yet the blaze, tho it looked the very essence of light, was strangely translucent; we could see with undazzled eyes every feature, and whether it was the working of my overwhelmed mind, or a true change, the countenance appeared to have passed at once from age to youth. A lofty joy, a look of supernal grandeur, a magnificent yet ethereal beauty, had transformed the features of the old man into the likeness of the winged sons of Immortality!

He spoke again, and the first sound of his voice thrilled through every bosom and made every man start from his seat. A Christian's Prayer

"Men and brethren! it is the desire of your Father that all should be saved—Jew and Gentile alike—for with Him there is no respect of persons. He is the Father of all! Christianity is not a philosophic dream, but a divine command—the summons of the God of gods, that you should accept His mercy—the opening of the gates of an eternal world! It is not a call to the practise of barren virtue, but a declaration of reward mightier than the imagination of man can conceive. Would you be immortals—would you be glorious as the stars of heaven—would you possess eternal faculties of happiness, supremacy, and knowledge? Ask for forgiveness of your evil, in the name of Jesus of Nazareth! What is easier than the price? What more transcendent than the reward? Who shall tell the limit of the risen soul? What resistless power, what more than regal majesty, what celestial beauty may be in His fame! What expansion of intellect, what overflowing tides of new sensation, what shapes of loveliness, what radiant stores of thought and mysteries of exhaustless knowledge, may be treasured for Him! What endless ascent through new ranks of being, each as much more glorious than the last as the risen spirit is above man! For what can be the limit to the power of God to make those happy, glorious, and mighty whom He will? For what can be the bound to the fellow heirs with Christ, their Leader in trial, their Leader in triumph? Omnipotence for their protector, for their friend, for their father! He who gave to us His own Son, will He not with Him give us all things?"

The voice sank into prayer.

"King of kings! if through a long life I have labored in Thy cause, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren, in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness—Thine alone be the praise, Thine the glory, O Thou who hast

brought me through them all, with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. And now, Lord, Thou who shalt change my vile body into the likeness of Thy glorious body, be with Thy servant in this last hour! Savior and God! receive my spirit, that where Thou art, even I may be with Thee!"

He was silent; the splendor gradually passed away from his form, and he knelt upon the sand, bowing his neck to receive the blow. But to lift a hand against such a being seemed now an act of profanation. The ax-bearer dared not approach. The spectators sat hushed in involuntary homage; and not a word, not a gesture broke the silence of veneration.

At length a flourish of distant trumpets was heard. Cavalry galloped forward, announcing the Emperor, and Nero, habited as a charioteer in the games, drove his gilded car into the arena. The Christian had risen and, with his hands clasped upon his breast, was awaiting death. Nero cast the headsman an execration at his tardiness; the ax swept round, and when I glanced again, the old man lay beside his brethren.

This man I had sacrificed. My heart smote me; I would have fled the place of blood, but I was in the midst of guards; more of my victims were to be slain, and I must be the shrinking witness of all. The Emperor's arrival commenced the grand display. He took his place under the curtains of the royal pavilion. The dead were removed; perfumes were scattered through the air; rose-water was sprinkled from silver tubes upon the exhausted multitude; music resounded, incense burned, and in the midst of those preparations of luxury the lion-combat began.

A portal of the arena opened and the combatant, with a mantle thrown over his face and figure, was led in surrounded by soldiery. The lion roared and ramped against the bars of its den at the sight. The guard put a sword and buckler into the hands of the Christian, and he was left alone. He drew the mantle from his face, and looked slowly and steadily round the amphitheater. His fine countenance and lofty bearing raised a universal sound of admiration. He might have stood for an Apollo encountering the Python. His eyes at last

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I heard the gnashing of his white fangs above me.

See page 169.

turned on mine. Could I believe my senses? Constantius was before me! Constanti and the Li

All my rancor vanished. In the moment before, I could have struck the betrayer to the heart; I could have called on the severest vengeance of man and Heaven to smite the destroyer of my child. But to see him hopelessly doomed; the man whom I had honored for his noble qualities, whom I had even loved, whose crime was at worst but the crime of giving way to the strongest temptation that can bewilder man; to see this noble creature flung to the savage beast, torn piecemeal before my eyes—I would have cried to earth and heaven to save him. But my tongue cleaved to the roof of my mouth; I would have thrown myself at the feet of Nero, but I sat like a man of stone, pale, paralyzed—the beating of my pulse stopped—my eyes alone alive.

The gate of the den was now thrown back, and the lion rushed in with a roar and a bound that bore him half across the arena. I saw the sword glitter in the air; when it waved again it was covered with blood, and a howl told that the blow had been driven home. The lion, one of the largest from Numidia, and made furious by thirst and hunger, an animal of prodigious power, crouched for an instant as if to make sure of his prey, crept a few paces onward, and sprang at the victim's throat. He was met by a second wound, but his impulse was irresistible, and Constantius was flung upon the ground.

A cry of natural horror rang round the amphitheater. The struggle was now for instant life or death. They rolled over each other; the lion reared on his hind feet and with gnashing teeth and distended talons plunged on the man; again they rose together. Anxiety was now at its wildest height. The sword swung round the champion's head in bloody circles. They fell again. The hand of Constantius had grasped the lion's mane, and the furious bounds of the monster could not loose his hold; but his strength was evidently giving way; he still struck terrible blows, but each was weaker than the one before; till, collecting his whole force for a last effort, he darted one mighty blow into the

The ence of ne

lion's throat and sank. The savage yelled, and, spouting out blood, fled bellowing round the arena. But the hand still grasped the mane, and his conqueror was dragged whirling through the dust at his heels. A universal outcry now arose to save Constantius, if he were not already dead. But the lion, tho bleeding from every vein, was still too terrible, and all shrank from the hazard. At length the grasp gave way and the body lay motionless on the ground.

What happened for some moments after I know not. There was a struggle at the portal; a woman forced her way through the guards, rushed in alone, and flung herself upon the victim. The sight of a new prey roused the lion; he tore the ground with his talons; he lashed his streaming sides with his tail; he lifted up his mane and bared his fangs. But he came no longer with a bound; he dreaded the sword, and crept, snuffing the blood on the sand, and stealing round the body in circuits still diminishing.

The confusion in the vast assemblage was now extreme. Voices innumerable called for aid. Women screamed and fainted. Even the hard-hearted populace, accustomed as they were to the sacrifices of life, were roused to honest nurses. The guards grasped their arms, and waited but for a sign of mercy from the Emperor. But Nero gave no sign. I glanced upon the woman's face. It was Salome! I sprang upon my feet. I called on her name; I implored her to fly from that place of death, to come to my arms, to think of the agonies of all who loved her.

She had raised the head of Constantius on her knee, and was wiping the pale visage with her hair. At the sound of my voice she looked up, and calmly casting back the locks from her forehead, fixed her gaze upon me. She still knelt; one hand supported the head, and with the other she pointed to it, as her only answer. I again adjured her. There was the silence of death among the thousands round me. A sudden fire flashed into her eye—her cheek burned. She waved her hand with an air of superb sorrow.

"I am come to die," she uttered, in a lofty tone. "This bleeding body was my husband. I have no father. The world

contains for me but this clay in my arms. Yet," and kissed the ashy lips before her, "yet, my Constantius, it was to save that father that your generous heart defied the peril of this hour. It was to redeem him from the hand of evil that you abandoned our quiet home! Yes, cruel father, here lies the preserver who threw open your dungeon, who led you safe through conflagration, who to the last moment of his liberty only thought how he might protect you."

Tears at length fell in floods from her eyes.

"But," said she, in a tone of wild power, "he was betrayed, and may the Power whose thunders avenge the cause of His people pour down just retribution upon the head that dared——"

I heard my own condemnation about to be unconsciously pronounced by the lips of my child. Wound up to the last degree of suffering, I tore my way, leaped on the bars before me, and plunged into the arena by her side. The height was stunning; I tottered forward a few paces, and fell. The lion gave a roar and sprang upon me. I lay helpless under him; I felt his fiery breath; I saw his lurid eye glaring; I heard the gnashing of his white fangs above me——

An exulting shout arose. I saw him reel as if struck—gore filled his jaws. Another mighty blow was driven to his heart. He sprang high into the air with a howl. He dropped—he was dead! The amphitheater thundered with acclamation.

With Salome clinging to my bosom, Constantius raised me from the ground. The roar of the lion had roused him from his swoon, and two blows saved me. The falchion was broken in the heart of the monster. The whole multitude stood up supplicating for our lives, in the name of filial piety and heroism. Nero, devil as he was, dared not resist the strength of the popular feeling; he waved a signal to the guards; the portal was opened, and my children, sustaining my feeble steps, and showered with garlands and ornaments from innumerable hands, slowly led me from the arena.

END OF BOOK I.

BOOK
II

CHAPTER XXII

The Year of Jubilee

THE first rage of the persecution was at an end;[80] the popular thirst for blood was satiated. The natural admiration that follows fortitude and innocence, and the natural hatred that consigns a tyrant to the execration of his time and of posterity, found their way, and Nero dared murder no more. I voluntarily shared the prison of Constantius and my child. Its doors were now set open. The liberality of my people supplied the means of returning to Judea, and we hastened down the Tiber in the first vessel that spread her sails from this throne of desolation.

The chances that had brought us together were soon explained. Salome, urged to desperation by the near approach of her marriage, and anxious to save herself from the perjury of vowing her love to one unpossessed of her heart, had flown with Constantius to Cæsarea. The only person in their confidence was the domestic who betrayed me into the hands of the procurator, and who assisted them only that he might lure me from home.

At Cæsarea they were wedded, and remained in concealment, under the protection of the young Septimius. My transmission to Rome struck them with terror, and Constantius instantly embarked to save me by his Italian influence. The attempt was surrounded with peril, but Salome would not be left behind. Disguised, to avoid my possible refusal of life at his hands, he followed me step by step. There were many of our people among the attendants and even in the higher offices of the court. The Empress had, in her reproaches to Nero, disclosed the new barbarity of my sentence. No time was to be lost. Constantius, at the imminent hazard of life, entered the palace. He saw the block already erected

The Return to Judea

in the garden before the window, where Nero sat inventing a melody which was to grace my departure. The confusion of the fire offered the only escape. I was witness of his consternation when he made so many fruitless efforts to penetrate to the place where Salome remained in the care of his relatives. When I scaled the burning mansion, he desperately followed, lost his way among the ruins, and was giving up all hope when, wrapped in fire and smoke, Salome fell at his feet. He bore her to another mansion of his family. It had given shelter to the chief Christians. They were seized. His young wife scorned to survive Constantius; and chance and my own fortunate desperation alone saved me from seeing their martyrdom.

We returned to Judea. In the first embrace of my family all was forgotten and forgiven. My brother rejoiced in Salome's happiness; and even her rejected kinsman, despite his reluctance, acknowledged the claims of him who had saved the life of the father, to the daughter's hand.

What perception of health is ever so exquisite as when we first rise from the bed of sickness? What enjoyment of the heart is so full of delight as that which follows extreme suffering? I had but just escaped the most formidable personal hazards; I had escaped the still deeper suffering of seeing ruin fall on beings whom I would have died to rescue. Salome's heart, overflowing with happiness, gave new brightness to her eyes and new animation to her lovely form. She danced with involuntary joy, she sang, she laughed; her fancy kindled into a thousand sparklings. Beautiful being! in my visions thou art still before me. I clasp thee to my widowed heart, and hear thy sweet voice, sweeter than the fountain in the desert to the pilgrim, cheering me in the midst of my more than pilgrimage.

An accession of opulence gave the only increase, if increase could be given, to the happiness that seemed within my reach. The year of Jubilee arrived. Abolished as the chief customs of Judea had been by the weakness and guilt of idolatrous kings and generations, they were still observed by all who honored the faith of their fathers. The law of Jubilee was

sacred in our mountains; it was the law of a wisdom and benevolence above man. During the Jubilee

Its peculiar adaptation to Israel, its provision for the virtue and happiness of the individual, and its safeguard of the public strength and constitutional integrity, were unrivaled amongst the finest ordinances of the ancient world.

On the entrance of the Israelites into Canaan, the land was divided, by the inspired command, among the tribes according to their numbers. To each family a portion was assignd as a gift from heaven. The gift was to be inalienable. The estate might be sold for a period; but in the fiftieth year, on the evening of the Day of Atonement, in the month of Tishri, the sound of the trumpets from the sanctuary, echoed by thousands of voices from every mountain-top, proclaimed the Jubilee. Then returned, without purchase, every family to its original possessions. All the more abject degradations of poverty, the wearing out of families, the hopeless ruin, were obviated by this great law. The most undone being in the limits of Judea had still a hold in the land. His ruin could not be final, perhaps could not extend beyond a few years; in the last extremity he could not be scorned as one whose birthright was extinguished; the Jubilee was to raise him up and place the outcast in the early rank of the sons of Israel. All the higher feelings were cherished by this incomparable hope. The man, conscious of his future possessions, retained the honorable pride of property under the sternest privations. The time was hurrying on when he should stand on an equality with mankind, when his worn spirit should begin the world again with fresh vigor, if he were young; or when he should sit under the vine and the fig-tree of his fathers, if his age refused again to struggle for the distinctions of the world.

The agrarian law of Rome and Sparta, feeble efforts to establish this true foundation of personal and political vigor, showed at once both the natural impulse and the weakness of human wisdom. The Roman plunged the people into furious dissensions, which perished almost in their birth. The Spartan was secured for a time only by barbarian prohibitions of money

The Allotment of Naphtali

and commerce—a code which raised an iron wall against civilization, turned the people into a perpetual soldiery, and finally, by the mere result of continual war, overthrew liberty, dominion, and name.

The Jubilee was for a peculiar people, restricted by a divine interposition from increase beyond the original number. But who shall say how far the same benevolent interposition might not have been extended to all nations, if they had revered the original compact of heaven with man? How far throughout the earth the provisions for each man's wants might not have been secured—the overwhelming superabundance of portionless life that fills the world with crime might not have been restrained; how far despotism, that growth of desperate abjectness of the understanding and gross corruption of the senses, might not have been repelled by manly knowledge and native virtue? But the time may come.

In the first allotments of the territory, ample domains had been appointed for the princes and leaders of the tribes. One of those princedoms now returned to me, and I entered upon the inheritance of the leaders of Naphtali, a large extent of hill and valley, rich with corn, olive, and vine. The antiquity of possession gave a kind of hallowed and monumental interest to the soil. I was master of its wealth, but I indulged a loftier feeling in the recollection of those who had trod the palace and the plain before me. Every chamber bore the trace of those whom the history of my country had taught me to reverence; and often, when in some of the fragrant evenings of summer I have flung myself among the thick beds of bloom that spread spontaneously over my hills, the spirits of the loved and honored seemed to gather round me. I saw once more the matron gravity and the virgin grace; even the more remote generations, those great progenitors who with David fought the Philistine; the solemn chieftains who with Joshua followed the Ark of the Covenant through toil and battle into the promised land; the sainted sages who witnessed the giving of the law, and worshiped Him who spake in thunder from Sinai; all moved before me, for all had trod the very ground on which I gazed. Could I transfer myself back

to their time, on that spot I should stand among a living circle of heroic and glorious beings before whose true glory the pomps of earth were vain; the hearers of the prophets themselves; the servants of the man of miracle, the companions of the friend of God; nay, distinction that surpasses human thought, themselves the chosen of heaven.

The Summons of Florus

The cheering occupations of rural life were to be henceforth pursued on a scale more fitting my rank. I was the first chieftain of my tribe, the man by whose wisdom multitudes were to be guided, and by whose benevolence multitudes were to be sustained. I felt that mingled sense of rank and responsibility which with the vain, the ignorant, or the vicious is the strongest temptation to excess, but with the honorable and intelligent constitutes the most pleasurable and the most elevated state of the human mind.

Yet what are the fortunes of man but a ship launched on an element whose essence is restlessness? The very wind, without which we can not move, gathers to a storm and we are undone! The tyranny of our conquerors had for a few months been paralyzed by the destruction of Rome. But the governor of Judea was not to be long withheld, where plunder allured the most furious rapacity that perhaps ever hungered in the heart of man. I was in the midst of our harvest, surrounded with the fruitage of the year and enjoying the sights and sounds of patriarchal life, when I received the formidable summons to present myself again before Florus. Imprisonment and torture were in the command. He had heard of my opulence, and I knew how little his insolent cupidity would regard the pardon under which I had returned. I determined to retire into the mountains and defy him.

But the Roman plunderer had the activity of his countrymen. On the very night of my receiving the summons I was roused from sleep by the outcries of the retainers, who in that season of heat lay in the open air round the palace. I started from my bed, only to see with astonishment the courtyards filled with cavalry, galloping in pursuit of the few peasants who still fought for their lord. There was no time to be lost; the torches were already in the hands of the soldiery, and I

The Rescue of Septimius

must be taken or burned alive. Constantius was instantly at my side. I ordered the trumpet to be sounded on the hills and we rushed out together, spear in hand. The Romans, alarmed by resistance where they had counted upon capture without a blow, fell back. The interval was fatal to them. Their retreat was intercepted by the whole body of the peasantry, at length effectually roused. The scythe and reaping-hook were deadly weapons to horsemen cooped up between walls, and in midnight. No efforts of mine could stop the havoc, when once the fury of my people was roused. A few escaped, who had broken wildly away in the first onset. The rest were left to cover the avenues with the first sanguinary offerings of the final war of Judea.

I felt that this escape could be but temporary, for the Roman policy never forgave until the slightest stain of defeat was wiped away. All was consternation in my family, and the order for departure, whatever tears it cost, found no opposition. In a few hours our camels and mules were loaded, our horses caparisoned, and we were prepared to quit the short-lived pomp of the house of my fathers. Constantius alone did not appear. This noble-minded being had won even upon me, until I considered him the substitute for my lost son; and I would run the last hazard rather than leave him to the Roman mercy. With the women, the interest was expressed by a declared resolution not to leave the spot until he was found. The caravan was broken up and all desire of escape was at an end.

At the close of a day of search through every defile of the country, he was seen returning at the head of some peasants bearing a body on a litter. I flew to meet him. He was in deep affliction, and drawing off the mantle which covered the face, he showed me Septimius.

"In the flight of the Romans," said he, "I saw a horseman making head against a crowd. His voice caught my ear. I rushed forward to save him, and he burst through the circle at full speed. But by the light of the torches I could perceive that he was desperately wounded. When day broke, I tracked him by his blood. His horse, gashed by scythes, had fallen

under him. I found my unfortunate friend lying senseless beside a rill, to which he had crept for water." Roman plans

Tears fell from his eyes as he told the brief story. I too remembered the generous interposition of the youth, and when I looked upon the paleness of those fine Italian features that I had so lately seen lighted up with living spirit, and in a scene of regal luxury, I felt a pang for the uncertainty of human things. But the painful part of the moral was spared us. The young Roman's wounds were stanched, and in an enemy and a Roman I found the means of paying a debt of gratitude. His appearance among the troops sent to seize me had been only a result of his anxiety to save the father of his friends. He had accidentally discovered the nature of the order and hoped to anticipate its execution. But he arrived only in time to be involved in the confusion of the flight. Pursued and wounded by the peasantry, he lost his way, and but for the generous perseverance of Constantius he must have died.

The public information which he brought was of the most important kind. In the Roman councils, the utter subjugation of Judea was resolved on; the last spark of national independence was to be extinguished, tho in the blood of the last native; a Roman colony established in our lands; the Roman worship introduced; and Jerusalem profaned by a statue of Nero, and sacrifices to him as a god, on the altar of the sanctuary. To crush the resistance of the people, the legions, to the number of sixty thousand men, were under orders from proconsular Asia, Egypt, and Europe. The most distinguished captain of the empire, Vespasian, was called from Britain to the command, and the whole military strength of Rome was prepared to follow up the blow.

I summoned the chief men of the tribe. My temperament was warlike. The seclusion and studies of my early life had but partially suppressed my natural delight in the vividness of martial achievement. But the cause that now summoned me was enough to have kindled the dullest peasant into the soldier. I had seen the discipline of the enemy; I had made myself master of their system of war. Fortifications wher-

Principles of War

ever a stone could be piled upon a hill; provisions laid up in large quantities wherever they could be secured; small bodies of troops practised in maneuver, and perpetually in motion between the fortresses; a general base of operations to which all the movements referred—were the simple principles that had made them conquerors of the world. I resolved to give them a speedy proof of my pupilage.

CHAPTER XXIII

Preparing for an Attack

INDECISION in the beginning of war is worse than war. I decided that whatever were the consequences, the sword must be unsheathed without delay. With Eleazar and Constantius, I cast my eyes over the map, and examined on what point the first blow should fall. The proverbial safety of a multitude of councilors was obviously disregarded in the smallness of my council; yet few as we were, we differed upon every point but one, that of the certainty of our danger; the promptitude of Roman vengeance suffered no contest of opinion. Eleazar, with a spirit as manly as ever, faced hazard, yet gave his voice for delay.

The Hope of Success

"The sole hope of success," said he, "must depend on rousing the popular mind. The Roman troops are not to be beaten by any regular army in the world. If we attack them on the ordinary principles of war, the result can only be defeat, slaughter in dungeons, and deeper slavery. If the nation can be aroused, numbers may prevail over discipline; variety of attack may distract science; the desperate boldness of the insurgents may at length exhaust the Roman fortitude, and a glorious peace will then restore the country to that independence for which my life would be a glad and ready sacrifice. But you must first have the people with you, and for that purpose you must have the leaders of the people——"

"What!" interrupted I, "must we first mingle in the cabals of Jerusalem and rouse the frigid debaters of the Sanhedrin into action? Are we first to conciliate the irreconcilable, to soften the furious, to purify the corrupt? If the Romans are to be our tyrants till we can teach patriotism to faction, we may as well build the dungeon at once, for to the dungeon we are consigned for the longest life among us. Death or

Malatbiel's Ardor

glory for me. There is no alternative between, not merely the half slavery that we now live in, and independence, but between the most condign suffering and the most illustrious security. If the people would rise through the pressure of public injury, they must have risen long since; if from private violence, what town, what district, what family has not its claim of deadly retribution? Yet here the people stand, after a hundred years of those continued stimulants to resistance, as unresisting as in the day when Pompey marched over the threshold of the Temple. I know your generous friendship, Eleazar, and fear that your anxiety to save me from the chances of the struggle may bias your better judgment. But here I pledge myself, by all that constitutes the honor of man, to strike at all risks a blow upon the Roman crest that shall echo through the land. What! commit our holy cause in the nursing of those pampered hypocrites whose utter baseness of heart you know still more deeply than I do? Linger till those pestilent profligates raise their price with Florus by betraying a design that will be the glory of every man who draws a sword in it? Vainly, madly ask a brood that, like the serpent, engender and fatten among the ruins of their country to discard their venom, to cast their fangs, to feel for human feelings? As well ask the serpent itself to rise from the original curse. It is the irrevocable nature of faction to be base until it can be mischievous; to lick the dust until it can sting; to creep on its belly until it can twist its folds around the victim. No! let the old pensionaries, the bloated hangers-on in the train of every governor, the open sellers of their country for filthy lucre, betray me when I leave it in their power. To the field, I say—once and for all, to the field."

My mind, at no period patient of contradiction, was fevered by the perplexity of the time. I was about to leave the chamber when Constantius gravely stopped me.

"My father," said he, with a voice calmer than his countenance, "you have hurt our noble kinsman's feelings. It is not in an hour when our unanimity may fail that we should suffer dissensions between those whose hearts are

alike embarked in this great cause. Let me mediate between you." The Support of the People

He led Eleazar back from the casement to which he had withdrawn to cool his blood, burning with the offense of my language.

"Eleazar is in the right. The Romans are irresistible by any force short of the whole people. They have military possession of the country—all your fortresses, all your posts, all your passes. They are as familiar as you are with every defile, mountain, and marsh; they surround you with conquered provinces on the north, east, and south; your western barrier is open to them while it is shut to you; the sea is the high-road of their armies, while at their first forbidding, you dare not launch a galley between Libanus and Idumea. Nothing can counterbalance this local superiority but the rising of your whole people."

"Yet, are we to intrigue with the talkers in Jerusalem for this?" interrupted I. "What less than a descended thunderbolt could rouse them to a sense that there is even a heaven above them?"

"Still, we must have them with us," said Constantius, "for we must have all. Universality is the spirit of an insurrectionary war. If I were commander of a revolt, I should feel greater confidence of success at the head of a single province in which every human being was against the enemy, than at the head of an empire partially in arms. The mind even of the rudest spearsman is a great portion of him. The boldest shrinks from the consciousness that hostility is on all sides; that whether marching or at rest, watching or sleeping, by night or by day, hostility is round him; that it is in the very air he breathes, in the very food he eats; that every face he sees is the face of one who wishes him slain; that every knife, even every trivial instrument of human use, may be turned into a shedder of his blood. Those things, perpetually confronting his mind, break it down until the man grows reckless, miserable, undisciplined, and a dastard."

"Yet," observed Eleazar, "the constant robbery of an insurrectionary war must render it a favorite command."

Constantius Describes a Campaign

"Let me speak from experience," said Constantius. "Two years ago I was attached, with a squadron of galleys, to the expedition against the tribes of Mount Taurus. While the galleys wintered in Cyprus, I followed the troops up the hills. Nothing had been omitted that would counteract the severity of the season. Tents, provisions, clothing adapted to the hills, even luxuries despatched from the islands, gave the camps almost the indulgences of cities. The physical hardships of the campaign were trivial compared with those of hundreds in which the Romans had beaten regular armies. Yet the discontent was indescribable, from the perpetual alarms of the service. The mountaineers were not numerous and were but half armed; they were not disciplined at all. A Roman centurion would have outmaneuvered all their captains. But they were brave; they knew nothing but to kill or be killed, and it made no difference to them whether Death did his work by night or by day. Sleep to us was scarcely possible. To sit down on a march was to be leveled at by a score of arrows; to pursue the archers was to be lured into some hollow, where a fragment of the rock above or a felled tree, was ready to crush the legionaries. We chased them from hill to hill; we might as well have chased the vultures and eagles that duly followed us, with the perfect certainty of not being disappointed of their meal. Wherever the enemy showed themselves they were beaten, but our victory was totally fruitless. The next turn of the mountain road was a stronghold, from which we had to expect a new storm of arrows, lances, and fragments of rock.

"The mountaineers always had a retreat," he continued, "If we drove them from the pinnacles of the hills, they were in a moment in the valleys, where we must follow them at the risk of falling down precipices and being swallowed up by torrents, in which the strongest swimmer in the legions could not live for a moment. If we drove them from the valleys, we saw them scaling the mountains as if they had wings, and scoffing at our tardy and helpless movements, encumbered as we were with baggage and armor. We at length forced our way through the mountain range, and when with the loss of half the army

we had reached their citadel, we found that the work was to be begun again. To remain where we were was to be starved; we had defeated the barbarians, but they were as unconquered as ever, and our only resource was to retrace our steps, which we did at the expense of a battle every morning, noon, evening, and night, with a ruinous loss of life and the total abandonment of everything in the shape of baggage. The defeat was of course hushed up, and according to the old Roman policy, the escape was colored to a victory; I had the honor of carrying back the general into Italy, where he was decreed an ovation, a laurel crown, and a crowd of the usual distinctions; but the triumph belonged to the men of the mountains, and until our campaign is forgotten, no Roman captain will look for his laurels in Mount Taurus again."

The Force of Invasion

"Such forever be the fate of wars against the natural freedom of the brave," said I; "but the Cicilians had the advantage of an almost impenetrable country. Three-fourths of Judea is already in the enemy's possession."

"No country in which man can exist can be impenetrable to an invading army," was the reply. "Natural defenses are trifling before the vigor and dexterity of man. The true barrier is in the hearts of the defenders. We were masters of the whole range. We could not find a thousand men assembled on any one point. Yet we were not the actual possessors of a mile of ground beyond the square of our camp. We never saw a day without an attack, nor ever lay down at night without the certainty of some fierce attempt at a surprise. It was this perpetual anxiety that broke the spirits of the troops. All was in hostility to them. They felt that there was not a secure spot within the horizon. Every man whom they saw, they knew to be one who either had drawn Roman blood or who longed in his inmost soul to draw it. They dared not pass by a single rock without a search for a lurking enemy. Even a felled tree might conceal some daring savage, who was content to die on the Roman spears, after having flung his unerring lance among the ranks or shot an arrow that went through the thickest corslet. I have seen the boldest of the legionaries sink on the ground in absolute exhaustion of heart

Salathiel's Determination

with this hopeless and wearying warfare. I have seen men with muscles as strong as iron weep like children through mere depression. With the harsher spirits, all was execration and bitterness, even to the verge of mutiny. With the more generous all was regret at the waste of honor, mingled with involuntary admiration of the barbarians who thus defied the haughty courage and boasted discipline of the conquerors of mankind. The secret spring of their resistance was its universality. Every man was embarked in the common cause. There was no room for evasion under cover of a party disposed to peace; there was no Roman interest among the people, in which timidity or selfishness could take refuge. The national cause had not a lukewarm friend; the invaders had not a dubious enemy. The line was drawn with the sword, and the cause of national independence triumphed, as it ought to triumph."

"But we are a people split into as many varieties of opinion as there are provinces or even villages in Judea," observed Eleazar; "the Jew loves to follow the opinions of the head of his family, the chief man of his tribe, or even of the priest, who has long exercised an influence over his district. We have not the slavishness of the Asiatic, but we still want the personal choice of the European. We must secure the leaders, if we would secure the people."

"Men," said Constantius, "are intrinsically the same in every climate under heaven. They will all hate hazard, where nothing but hazard is to be gained. They will all linger for ages in slavery, where the taskmaster has the policy to avoid sudden violence; but they will all encounter the severest trials, where in the hour of injury they find a leader prepared to guide them to honor."

"And to that extent they shall have trial of me!" I exclaimed. "Before another Sabbath I shall make the experiment of my fitness to be the leader of my countrymen. At the head of my own tribe I will march to the Holy City, seize the garrison, and from Herod's palace, from the very chair of the Procurator, will I at once silence the voice of faction and lift the banner to the tribes of Israel."

"Nobly conceived," said Constantius, his countenance glowing with animation; "blow upon blow is the true tactic of an insurrectionary war. We must strike at once, suddenly, and boldly. The sword of him who would triumph in a revolt must not merely sound on the enemy's helmet, but cut through it"

"Yet to a march on Jerusalem," said Eleazar, "the objections are palpable. The city would be out of all hope of a surprise, difficult to capture, and beyond all chance to keep."

"Ever tardy, thwarting, and contradictory!" I exclaimed; "if the Roman scepter lay under my heel, I should find Eleazar forbidding me to crush it. My mind is fixed; I will hear no more."

I started from my seat and paced the chamber. Eleazar approached me.

"My brother," said he, holding out his hand with a forgiving smile, "*we* must not differ. I honor your heart, Salathiel; I know your talents; there is not a man in Judea whom I should be prouder to see at the head of its councils. I agree with you in your views, and now I offer you myself and every man whom I can influence to follow you to the last extremity. The only question is, where the blow is to fall."

Constantius had been gazing on the chart of Judea, which lay between us on the table.

"If it be our object," said he, "to combine injury to the Romans with actual advantage to ourselves, to make a trial where failure can not be ruinous and where success may be of measureless value, here is the spot." He pointed to Masada."[1]

The fortress of Masada was built by Herod the Great as his principal magazine of arms. A fierce and successful soldier, one of his luxuries was the variety and costliness of his weapons, and the royal armory of Masada was renowned throughout Asia. Pride in the possession of such a trophy, probably aided by some reverence for the memory of the friend of Cæsar and Antony, whom the legions still almost worshiped as tutelar genii, originally saved it from the usual

The Preparations

Roman spoliation. But no native foot was permitted to enter the armory, and mysterious stories of the sights and sounds of those splendid halls filled the ears of the people. Masada was held to be the talisman of the Roman power over Judea by more than the people; the belief had made its way among the legions, and no capture could be a bolder omen of the war.

I still preferred the more direct blow on Jerusalem, and declaimed on the vital importance in all wars, of seizing on the capital. But I was controlled. Eleazar's grave wisdom and the science of Constantius deprived me of argument, and the attack on Masada was finally planned before we left the chamber. Nothing could be more primitive than our plan for the siege of the most scientific fortification in Judea, crowded with men and furnished with every implement and machine of war that Roman experience could supply. Our simple preparations were a few ropes for ladders, a few hatchets for cutting down gates and palisadoes, and a few faggots for setting on fire what we could. Five hundred of our tribe, who had never thrown a lance but in hunting, formed our expedition, and at the head of those, Constantius, who claimed the exploit by the right of discovery, was to march at dusk, conceal himself in the forests during the day, and on the evening of his arrival within reach of the fortress attempt it by surprise. Eleazar was, in the mean time, to rouse his retainers, and I was to await at their head the result of the enterprise, and if successful, unfurl the standard of Naphtali and advance on Jerusalem.

CHAPTER XXIV

The Departure of Constantius

The Hour Banquet

THE remainder of this memorable day lingered on with a tardiness beyond description. The criminal who counts the watches of the night before his execution has but a faint image of that hot and yet pining anxiety, that loathing of all things unconnected with the one mighty event, that mixture of hopelessness and hope, that morbid nervousness of every fiber in his frame, which make up the suspense of the conspirator in even the noblest cause.

When the hour of banquet came, I sat down in the midst of magnificence, as was the custom of my rank. The table was filled with guests; all around me was gaiety and pomp, high-born men, handsome women, richly attired attendants; plate, the work of Tyrian and Greek artists, in its massive beauty; walls covered with tissues; music filling the air cooled by fountains of perfumed waters. I felt as little of them as if I were in the wilderness. The richest wines, the most delicate fruits, palled on my taste. If I had one wish, it was that for the next forty-eight hours oblivion might amount to insensibility! At my wife and daughters I ventured but one glance. I thought that I had never before seen them look so fitted to adorn their rank, to be the models of grace, loveliness, and honor, to society, and the thought smote my heart —how soon may all this be changed!

My eyes sought Constantius; he had just returned from his preparations, and came in glowing with the enthusiasm of the soldier. He sat down beside Salome, and his cheek gradually turned to the hue of death. He sat like myself, absorbed in frequent reverie, and to the playful solicitations of Salome that he would indulge in the table after his fatigue, he gave forced smiles and broken answers. The future was plainly

Constantius Seeks Balathiel

busy with us both; with all that the heart of man could love beside him, he felt the pang of contrast, and when on accidentally lifting his eyes, they met mine, the single conscious look interchanged told the perturbation that preyed on both in the heart's core.

I soon rose, and under pretense of having letters to despatch to our friends in Rome, retired to my chamber. There lay the chart still on the table, the route to Masada marked by pencil lines. With what breathlessness I now traced every point and bearing of it! There, within a space over which I could stretch my arm, was my world. In that little boundary was I to struggle against the supremacy that covered the earth! Those fairy hills, those scarcely visible rivers, those remote cities, dots of human habitation, were to be henceforth the places of siege and battle, memorable for the destruction of human life, engrossing every energy of myself and my countrymen, and big with the fates of generations on generations.

It was dusk, and I was still devouring with my eyes this chart of prophecy when Constantius entered.

"I have come," said he gravely, "to bid you farewell for the night. In two days I hope we shall all meet again."

"No, my brave son," I interrupted, "we do not leave each other to-night."

He looked surprised. "I must be gone this instant. Eleazar has done his part with the activity of his honest and manly mind. Two miles off, in the valley under the date-grove, I have left five hundred of the finest fellows that ever sat a charger. In half an hour Sirius rises; then we go, and let the governor of Masada look to it! Farewell, and wish me good fortune."

"May every angel that protects the righteous cause hover above your head!" I exclaimed; "but no farewell, for we go together."

"Do you doubt my conduct of the enterprise?" asked he strongly. "'Tis true I have been in the Roman service, but that service I hated from the bottom of my soul. I was a Greek and bound to Rome no longer than she could hold me

in her chain. If I could have found men to follow me, I should have done in Cyprus what I now do in Judea. The countryman of Leonidas, Cimon, and Timeleon was not born to hug his slavery. I am now a son of Judea; to her my affections have been transplanted, and to her, if she does not reject me, shall my means and my life be given."

He relaxed the belt from his waist and dropped it with his simitar on the ground. I lifted it and placed it again in his hand.

"No, Constantius," I replied, "I honor your zeal, and would confide in you if the world hung upon the balance. But I can not bear the thought of lingering here while you are in the field. My mind, within these few hours, has been on the rack. I must take the chances with you."

"It is utterly impossible," was his firm answer; "your absence would excite instant suspicion. The Roman spies are everywhere. The natural result follows, that our march would be intercepted, and I am not sure but that even now we may be too late. That inconceivable sagacity by which the Romans seem to be masters of every man's secret has been already at work; troops were seen on the route to Masada this very day. Let it be known that the prince of Naphtali has left his palace, and the dozen squadrons of Thracian horse which I saw within those four days at Tiberias will be riding through your domains before the next sunset."

This reflection checked me. "Well then," said I, "go, and the protection of Him whose pillar of cloud led His people through the sea and through the desert be your light in the hour of peril!"

I pressed his hand; he turned to depart, but came back, and after a slight hesitation said: "If Salome had once offended her noble father by her flight, the offense was mine. Forgive her, for her heart is still the heart of your child. She loves you. If I fall, let the memory of our disobedience lie in my grave!"

His voice stopped, and mine could not break the silence.

"Let what will come," resumed he with an effort, "tell Salome that the last word on my lips was her name."

The Festal Scene

He left the chamber, and I felt as if a portion of my being had gone forth from me.

This day was one of the many festivals of our country, and my halls echoed with sounds of enjoyment. The immense gardens glittered with illumination in all the graceful devices of which our people were such masters, and when I looked out for the path of Constantius, I was absolutely pained by the sight of so much fantastic pleasure while my hero was pursuing his way through darkness and danger.

At length the festival was over. The lights twinkled fainter among the arbors, the sounds of glad voices sank, and I saw from my casement the evidences of departure in the trains of torches that moved up the surrounding hills. The sight of a starlit sky has always been to me among the softest and surest healers of the heart, and I gazed upon that mighty scene which throws all human cares into such littleness, until my composure returned.

The last of the guests had left the palace before I ventured to descend. The vases of perfumes still breathed in the hall of the banquet; the alabaster lamps were still burning; but excepting the attendants who waited on my steps at a distance, and whose fixed figures might have been taken for statues, there was not a living being near me of the laughing and joyous crowd that had so lately glittered, danced, and smiled within those sumptuous walls. Yet what was this but a picture of the common rotation of life? Or by a yet more immediate moral, what was it but a picture of the desertion that might be coming upon me and mine? I sat down to extinguish my sullen philosophy in wine. But no draft that ever passed the lip could extinguish the fever that brooded on my spirit. I dreaded that the presence of my family might force out my secret, and lingered with my eyes gazing, without sight, on the costly covering of the board.

A sound of music from an inner hall to which Miriam and her daughters had retired, aroused me. I stood at the door, gazing on the group within. The music was a hymn with which they closed the customary devotions of the day. But there was something in its sound to me that I had never felt

before. At the moment when those sweet voices were pouring out the gratitude of hearts as innocent and glowing as the hearts of angels, a scene of horror might be acting. The husband of Salome might be struggling with the Roman sword; nay, he might be lying a corpse under the feet of the cavalry, that before morn might bring the news of his destruction in the flames that might startle us from our sleep, and the swords that might pierce our bosoms. A Beautiful Group

And what beings were those thus appointed for the sacrifice? The lapse of even a few years had perfected the natural beauty of my daughters. Salome's sparkling eye was more brilliant; her graceful form was molded into more easy elegance, and her laughing lip was wreathed with a more playful smile. Never did I see a creature of deeper witchery. My Esther, my noble and dear Esther, who was perhaps the dearer to me from her inheriting a tinge of my melancholy, yet a melancholy exalted by genius into a charm, was this night the leader of the song of holiness. Her large uplifted eye glowed with the brightness of one of the stars on which it was fixed. Her hands fell on the harp in almost the attitude of prayer, and the expression of her lofty and intellectual countenance, crimsoned with the theme, told of a communion with thoughts and beings above mortality. The hymn was done, the voices had ceased, yet the inspiration still burned in her soul; her hands still shook from the chords' harmonies, sweet, but of the wildest and boldest brilliancy; bursts and flights of sound, like the rushing of the distant waterfall at night, or the strange, solemn echoes of the forest in the first swell of the storm.

Miriam and Salome sat beholding her in silent admiration and love. The magnificent dress of the Jewish female could not heighten the power of such beauty; but it filled up the picture. The jeweled tiaras, the embroidered shawls, the high-wrought and massive armlets, the silken robes and sashes fringed with pearl and diamond, the profusion of dazzling ornament that form the Oriental costume to this day, were the true habits of the beings that then sat, unconscious of the delighted yet anxious eye that drank in the

The fate of Constantius

joy of their presence. I saw before me the pomp of princedoms, investing forms worthy of thrones.

My entrance broke off the harper's spell, and I found it a hard task to answer the touching congratulations that flowed upon me. But the hour waned, and I was again left alone for the few minutes which it was my custom to give to meditation before I retired to rest. I threw open the door that led into a garden thick with the Persian rose and filling the air with cool fragrance. At my first glance upward, I saw Sirius—he was on the verge of the horizon.

The thoughts of the day again gathered over my soul. I idly combined the fate of Constantius with the decline of the star that he had taken for his signal. My senses lost their truth, or contributed to deceive me. I fancied that I heard sounds of conflict; the echo of horses' feet rang in my ears. A meteor that slowly sailed across the sky struck me as a supernatural summons. My brain, fearfully excitable since my great misfortune, at length kindled up such strong realities that I found myself on the point of betraying the burden of my spirit by some palpable disclosure.

Twice had I reached the door of Miriam's chamber to tell her my whole perplexity. But I heard the voice of her attendants within and again shrank from the tale. I ranged the long galleries perplexed with capricious and strange torments of the imagination.

"If he should fall," said I, "how shall I atone for the cruelty of sending him upon a service of such hopeless hazard—a few peasants with naked breasts against Roman battlements? What soldier would not ridicule my folly in hoping success; what man would not charge me with scorn of the life of my kindred? The blood of my tribe will be upon my head forever. There sinks the prince of Naphtali! In the grave of my gallant son and his companions is buried my dream of martial honor; the sword that strikes him cuts to the ground my last ambition of delivering my country."

The advice of Constantius returned to my mind, but like the meeting of two tides, it was only to increase the tumult within. I felt the floor shake under my hurried tread. I smote my

forehead—it was covered with drops of agony. The voices within my wife's chamber had ceased. But was I to rouse her from her sleep, perhaps the last quiet sleep that she was ever to take, only to hear intelligence that must make her miserable? Miriam's Comfor

I leaned my throbbing forehead upon one of the marble tables, as if to imbibe coolness from the stone. I felt a light hand upon mine. Miriam stood beside me.

"Salathiel!" pronounced she in an unshaken voice, "there is something painful on your mind. Whether it be only a duty on your part to disclose it to me, I shall not say; but if you think me fit to share your happier hours, must I have the humiliation of feeling that I am to be excluded from your confidence in the day when those hours may be darkened?"

I was silent, for to speak was beyond my strength, but I pressed her delicate fingers to my bosom.

"Misfortune, my dear husband," resumed she, "is trivial but when it reaches the mind. Oh, rather let me encounter it in the bitterest privations of poverty and exile; rather let me be a nameless outcast to the latest year I have to live, than feel the bitterness of being forgotten by the heart to which, come life or death, mine is bound forever and ever."

I glanced up at her. Tears dropped on her cheeks, but her voice was firm.

"I have observed you," said she, "in deep agitation during the day, but I forbore to press you for the cause. I have listened now, till long past midnight, to the sound of your feet, to the sound of groans and pangs wrung from your bosom; nay, to exclamations and broken sentences which have let me most involuntarily into the knowledge that this disturbance arises from the state of our country. I know your noble nature, and I say to you, in this solemn and sacred hour of danger, follow the guidance of that noble nature."

I cast my arms about her neck and imprinted upon her lips a kiss as true as ever came from human love. She had taken a weight from my soul. I detailed the whole design to her. She listened with many a change from red to pale, and many a tremor of the white hand that lay in mine. When I ceased, the woman in her broke forth in tears and sighs.

So, Prince of Naphtali!

"Yet," said she, "you must go to the field. Dismiss the thought that for the selfish desire of looking even upon you in safety here I should hazard the dearer honor of my lord. It is right that Judea should make the attempt to shake off her tyranny. The people can never be deceived in their own cause. Kings and courts may be deluded into the choice of incapacity, but the man whom a people will follow from their firesides must bear the stamp of a leader."

"Admirable being!" I exclaimed, "worthy to be honored while Israel has a name! Then I have your consent to follow Constantius. By speed I may reach him before he can have arrived at the object of the enterprise. Farewell, my best-beloved—farewell!"

She fell into my arms in a passion of tears, but at length recovered and said:

"This is weakness, the mere weakness of surprise. Yes; go, prince of Naphtali. No man must take the glory from you. Constantius is a hero, but you must be a king, and more than a king; not the struggler for the glories of royalty, but for the glories of the rescuer of the people of God. The first blow of the war must not be given by another, dear as he is. The first triumph, the whole triumph, must be my lord's."

She knelt down and poured out her soul to Heaven in eloquent supplication for my safety. I listened in speechless homage.

"Now go," sighed she, "and remember in the day of battle who will then be in prayer for you. Court no unnecessary peril, for if you perish, which of us would desire to live?"

She again sank upon her knees, and I in reverent silence descended from the gallery.

CHAPTER XXV

Salathiel in Strange Company

My preparations were quickly made. I divested myself of my robes, led out my favorite barb, flung a haik over my shoulders, and by the help of my Arab turban might have passed for a plunderer in any corner of Syria. This was done unseen by any eye, for the crowd of attendants that thronged the palace in the day were now stretched through the courts, or on the terraces, fast asleep, under the double influence of a day of feasting and a night of tepid summer air. I rode without stopping until the sun began to throw up his yellow rays through the vapors of the Lake of Tiberias. Then to ascertain alike the progress of Constantius and to avoid the chances of meeting with some of those Roman squadrons which were continually moving between the fortresses, I struck off the road into a forest, tied my barb to a tree, and set forth to reconnoiter the scene.

Traveling on foot was the common mode in a country which, like Judea, was but little fitted for the breed of horses, and I found no want of companions. Pedlers, peasants, disbanded soldiers, and probably thieves diversified my knowledge of mankind within a few miles. I escaped under the sneer of the soldier and the compassion of the peasant. The first glance at my wardrobe satisfied the robber that I was not worth the exercise of his profession, or perhaps that I was a brother of the trade. I here found none of the repulsiveness that makes the intercourse of higher life so unproductive. Confidence was on every tongue, and I discovered, even in the sandy ways of Palestine, that to be a judicious listener is one of the first talents for popularity all over the world. But of my peculiar objects I could learn nothing, though every man whom I met had some story of the Romans. I ascer-

Iathiel meets Strangers

tained, to my surprise, that the intelligence which Septimius brought from the imperial cabinet was known to the multitude. Every voice of the populace was full of tales, probably reckoned among the profoundest secrets of the state. I have made the same observation in later eras, and found, even in the most formal mysteries of the most frowning governments, the rumor of the streets outruns the cabinets. So it must be while diplomatists have tongues and while women and domestics have curiosity.

But if I were to rely on the accuracy of those willing politicians, the cause of independence was without hope. Human nature loves to make itself important, and the narrator of the marvelous is always great, according to the distention of his news. Those who had seen a cohort, invariably magnified it into a legion; a troop of cavalry covered half a province; and the cohorts marching from Asia Minor and Egypt for our garrisons, were reckoned by the very largest enumeration within the teller's capacity.

As I was sitting by a rivulet, moistening some of the common bread of the country which I had brought to aid my disguise, I entered into conversation with one of those unhoused exiles of society whom at the first glance we discern to be nature's commoners, indebted to no man for food, raiment, or habitation, the native dweller on the road. He had some of the habitual jest of those who have no care, and congratulated me on the size of my table, the meadow, and the unadulterated purity of my potation, the brook. He informed me that he came direct from the Nile, where he had seen the son of Vespasian at the head of a hundred thousand men. A Syrian soldier, returning to Damascus, who joined our meal, felt indignant at the discredit thus thrown on a general under whom he had received three pike-wounds and leave to beg his way home. He swore by Ashtoreth that the force under Titus was at least twice the number.

A third wanderer, a Roman veteran, of whom the remainder was covered over with glorious patches, arrived just in time to relieve his general from the disgrace of so limited a command, and another hundred thousand was instantly put under

his orders; sanctioned by asseverations in the name of Jupiter Capitolinus, and as many others of the calendar as the patriot could pronounce. This rapid recruiting threw the former authorities into the background, and the old legionary was, for the rest of the meal, the undisputed leader of the conversation. They had evidently heard some rumor of our preparations.

"To suppose," said the veteran, "that those circumcized dogs can stand against a regular-bred Roman general is sacrilege. Half his army, or a tenth of his army, would walk through the land, north and south, east and west, as easily as I could walk through this brook."

"No doubt of it," said the Syrian, "if they had some of our cavalry for flanking and foraging."

"Aye, for anything but fighting, comrade," said the Roman with a laugh.

"No; you leave out another capital quality," observed the beggar, "for none can deny that whoever may be first in the advance, the Syrians will be first in the retreat. There are two maneuvers to make a complete soldier—how to get into the battle, and how to get out of it. Now, the Syrians manage the latter in the most undoubted perfection."

"Silence, villain," exclaimed the Syrian, "or you have robbed your last hen-roost in this world."

"He says nothing but the truth for all that," interrupted the veteran. "But neither of us taxed your cavalry with cowardice. No; it was pure virtue. They had too much modesty to take the way into the field before other troops, and too much humanity not to teach them how to sleep without broken bones."

The beggar, delighted at the prospect of a quarrel, gave the assent that more embroiled the fray.

"Mark Antony did not say so," murmured the indignant Syrian.

"Mark Antony!" cried the Roman, starting upon his single leg, "glory to his name! But what could a fellow like you know about Mark Antony?"

"I only served with him," dryly answered the Syrian.

"Then here's my hand for you," exclaimed the brave old man, "we are comrades. I would love even a dog that had seen the face of Mark Antony. He was the first man that I ever carried buckler under. Aye, there was a soldier for you; such men are not made in this puling age. He could fight from morn till night, and carouse from night till morn, and never lose his seat on his charger in the field the day after. I have seen him run half naked through the snows in Armenia, and walk in armor in the hottest day of Egypt. He loved the soldier, and the soldier loved him. So, comrade, here's to the health of Mark Antony. Ah, we shall never see such men again."

He drew out a flask of ration wine, closely akin to vinegar, of which he hospitably gave us each a cup, and after pouring a libation to his hero's memory, whom he evidently placed among his gods, swallowed the draft, in which we devoutly followed his example.

"Yet," said the beggar, "if Antony was a great man, he has left little men enough behind him. There's, for instance, the present gay procurator—six months in the gout, the other six months drunk, or if sober only thinking where he can rob next. This will bring the government into trouble before long, or I'm much mistaken. For my part, I pledge myself if he should take any part of my property——"

"Why, if he did," said the Syrian, "I give him credit for magic. He could find a crop of wheat in the sand or coin money out of the air. Where does your estate lie?"

"Comrade," said the veteran, laughing, "recollect; if the saying be true that people are least to be judged of by the outside, the rags of our jovial friend must hide many a shekel; and as to where his estate lies, he has a wide estate who has the world for his portion, and money enough who thinks all his own that he can lay his fingers on."

The laugh was now loud against the beggar. He, however, bore all, like one accustomed to the buffets of fortune, and, joining in it, said:

"Whatever may be my talents in that way, there is no great chance of showing them in this company; but if you

should be present at the sack of Masada, and I should meet you on your way back——"

Dreams Beggar

"Masada!" exclaimed I instinctively.

"Yes, I left the town three days ago. On that very morning an order arrived to prepare for the coming of the great and good Florus, who in his wisdom, feeling the want of gold, has determined to fill up the hollows of the military chest and his own purse by stripping the armory of everything that can sell for money. My intelligence is from the best authority. The governor's principal bath-slave told it to one of the damsels of the steward's department, with whom the Ethiopian is mortally in love, and the damsel, in a moment of confidence, told it to me. In fact, to let you into *my* secret, I am now looking out for Florus, in whose train I intend to make my way back into this gold-mine."

"The villain!" cried the veteran; "disturb the arms of the dead! Why, they say that it has the very corselet and buckler that Mark Antony wore when he marched against the Idumeans."

"I fear more the disturbance of the arms of the living," said the Syrian; "the Jews will take it for granted that the Romans are giving up the business in despair, and if I'm a true man, there will be blood before I get home."

"No fear of that, fellow soldier," said the veteran gaily; "you have kept your two legs, and when they have so long carried you out of harm's way, it would be the worst treatment possible to leave you in it at last. But there is something in what you say. I had a dream last night. I thought that I saw the country in a blaze, and when I started from my sleep, my ears were filled with a sound like the trampling of ten thousand cavalry."

I drew my breath quickly, and to conceal my emotion, gathered up the fragments of our meal. On completing my work, I found the beggar's eye fixed on me,—he smiled.

"I too had a dream last night," said he, "and of much the same kind. I thought that I saw a cloud of cavalry, riding as fast as horse could lay hoof to ground; I never saw a more dashing set since my first campaign upon the highways of this

wicked world. I'll be sworn that whatever their errand may be, such riders will not come back without it. Their horses' heads were turned toward Masada, and I am now between two minds, whether I may not mention my dream to the procurator himself."

I found his keen eye turned on me again.

"Absurd!" said I; "he would recommend you only to his lictor."

"I rather think he would recommend me to his treasurer, for I never had a dream that seemed so like a fact. I should not be surprised to find that I had been sleeping with my eyes open."

His look convinced me that I was known! I touched his hand, while the soldiers were busy packing up their cups, and showed him gold. He smiled carelessly. I laid my hand on my poniard; he but smiled again.

"The sun is burning out," said he, "and I can stand talking here no longer. Farewell, brave soldiers, and safe home to you! Farewell, Arab, and safe home to those that you are looking after!"

He stalked away, and as he passed me, said in a low voice, "Glory to Naphtali!"

After exchanging good wishes with the old men, I followed him; he led the way toward the wood at a pace which kept me at a distance. When I reached the shade, he stopped, and prostrated himself before me.

"Will my lord," said he, "forgive the presumption of his servant? This day, when I first met you, your disguise deceived me. I bear intelligence from your friends."

I caught the fragment of papyrus from him, and read:

"All's well. We have hitherto met with nothing to oppose us. To-morrow night we shall be on the ground. If no addition be made to the force within, the surprise will be complete. Our cause itself is victory. Health to all we love!"

"Your mission is now done," said I; "go on to Naphtali, and you shall be rewarded as your activity has deserved."

"No," replied he, with the easy air of a licensed humorist; "I have but two things to think of in this world—my time

and my money; of one of them, I have infinitely more than I well know how to spend, and of the other infinitely less. I expected to have killed a few days in going up to Naphtali. But that hope has been cut off by my finding you half-way. I will now try Florus, and get rid of a day or two with that most worthy of men."

"That I forbid," interrupted I.

"Not if you will trust one whom your noble son has trusted. I am not altogether without some dislike to the Romans myself, nor something between contempt and hatred for Gessius Florus." His countenance darkened at the name. "I tell you," pronounced he bitterly, "that fellow's pampered carcass this day contains as black a mass of villainy as stains the earth. I have an old account to settle with him."

His voice quivered. "I was once no rambler, no outcast of the land. I lived on the side of Hermon, lovely Hermon! I was affianced to a maiden of my kindred, as sweet a flower as ever blushed with love and joy. Our bridal day was fixed. I went to Cæsarea-Philippi to purchase some marriage presents. When I returned, I found nothing but women weeping, and men furious with impotent rage. My bride was gone. A Roman troop had surrounded her father's house in the night and torn her away. Wild, distracted, nay, I believe raving mad, I searched the land. I kept life in me only that I might recover or revenge her. I abandoned property, friends, all! At length I made the discovery."

To hide his perturbation, he turned away. "Powers of justice and vengeance!" he murmured in a shuddering tone, "are there no thunders for such things? She had been seen by that hoary profligate. She was carried off by him. She spurned his insults. He ordered her to be chained, to be starved, to be lashed!"

Tears sprang to his eyes. "She still spurned him. She implored to die. She called upon my name in her misery. Wretch that I was, what could I, a worm, do under the heel of the tyrant? But I saw her at last; I made my way into the dungeon. There she sat, pale as the stone to which she was chained; a silent, sightless, bloodless, mindless skeleton.

The Slowness of Revenge

I called to her; she knew nothing. I pressed my lips to hers; she never felt them. I bathed her cold hands in my tears—I fell at her feet—I prayed to her but to pronounce one word, to give some sign of remembrance, to look on me. She sat like a statue; her reason was gone, gone forever!"

He flung himself upon the ground, and writhed and groaned before me. To turn him from a subject of such sorrow, I asked what he meant to do by his intercourse with Florus.

"To do?—not to stab him in his bed; not to poison him in his banquet; not to smite him with that speedy death which would be mercy—no, but to force him into ruin step by step; to gather shame, remorse, and anguish round him, cloud on cloud; to mix evil in his cup with such exquisite slowness that he shall taste every drop; to strike him only so far that he may feel the pang without being stunned; to mingle so much of hope in his undoing that he may never enjoy the vigor of despair; to sink him into his own Tartarus inch by inch till every fiber has its particular agony."

He yelled, suddenly rose from the ground, and rushed forward and threaded the thickets with a swiftness that made my pursuit in vain.

CHAPTER XXVI

In the Lions' Lair

THE violence of the beggar's anguish, and the strong probabilities of his story, engrossed me so much that I at first regretted the extraordinary flight which put it out of my power to offer him any assistance. I returned with a feeling of disappointment to the spot where I had left my horse, and was riding toward the higher county, to avoid the enemy's straggling parties, when I heard a loud outcry. On a crag so distant that I thought human speed could scarcely have reached it in the time, I saw this strange being making all kinds of signals, sometimes pointing to me, then to some object below him, and uttering a cry which might easily be mistaken for the howl of a wild beast. A Beggar's Signals

I reined up; it was impossible for me to ascertain whether he were warning me of danger or apprising others of my approach. Great stakes make man suspicious, and the prince of Naphtali, speeding to the capture of the principal armory of the legions, might be an object well worth a little treachery. I rapidly forgot the beggar's sorrows in the consideration of his habits; decided that his harangue was a piece of professional dexterity, probably played off every week of his life, and that if I would not be in Roman hands before night, I must ride in the precisely opposite direction to that which his signals so laboriously recommended. Nothing grows with more vigor than the doubt of human honesty. I satisfied myself in a few moments that I was a dupe, and dashed through thicket, over rock, forded torrent, and from the top of an acclivity, at which even my high-mettled steed had looked with repugnance, saw with the triumph of him who deceives the deceiver, the increased violence of the impostor's attitudes. He leaped from crag to crag with the activity of a goat, and

A Secluded Spot

when he could do nothing else, gave the last evidence of Oriental vexation by tearing his robes. I waved my hand to him in contemptuous farewell, and dismounting, for the side of the hill was almost precipitous, led my panting Arab through beds of wild myrtle, and every lovely and sweet-smelling bloom, to the edge of a valley that seemed made to shut out every disturbance of man.

A circle of low hills, covered to the crown with foliage, surrounded a deep space of velvet turf, kept green as the emerald by the moisture of a pellucid lake in its center, tinged with every color of heaven. The beauty of this sylvan spot was enhanced by the luxuriant profusion of almond, orange, and other trees that in every stage of production, from the bud to the fruit, covered the little knolls below and formed a broad belt round the lake.

Parched as I was by the intolerable heat, this secluded haunt of the very spirit of freshness looked doubly lovely. My eyes, half-blinded by the glare of the sands, and even my mind, exhausted by the perplexities of the day, found delicious relaxation in the verdure and dewy breath of the silent valley. My barb, with the quick sense of animals accustomed to the travel of the wilderness, showed her delight by playful boundings, the prouder arching of her neck, and the brighter glancing of her eye.

"Here," thought I, as I led her slowly toward the steep descent, "would be the very spot for the innocence that had not tried the world, or the philosophy that had tried it and found all vanity. Who could dream that within the borders of this distracted land, in the very hearing, almost within the very sight, of the last miseries that man can inflict on man, there was a retreat which the foot of man perhaps never yet defiled, and in which the calamities that afflict society might be as little felt as if it were among the stars!"

A violent plunge of the barb put an end to my speculation. She exhibited the wildest signs of terror, snorted and strove to break from me; then fixing her glance keenly on the thickets below, shook in every limb. Yet the scene was tranquillity itself; the chameleon lay basking in the sun, and the

only sound was that of the wild doves, murmuring under the broad leaves of the palm-trees. But my mare still resisted every effort to lead her downward; her ears were fluttering convulsively; her eyes were starting from their sockets. I grew peevish at the animal's unusual obstinacy, and was about to let her suffer thirst for the day, when I was startled by a tremendous roar.

A lion stood on the summit which I had but just quitted. He was not a dozen yards above my head, and his first spring must have carried me to the bottom of the precipice. The barb burst away at once. I drew the only weapon I had —a dagger—and hopeless as escape was, grasping the tangled weeds to sustain my footing, awaited the plunge. But the lordly savage probably disdained so ignoble a prey, and remained on the summit, lashing his sides with his tail and tearing up the ground. He at length stopped suddenly, listened, as to some approaching foot, and then with a hideous yell, sprang over me, and was in the thicket below at a single bound.

The whole jungle was instantly alive; the shade which I had fixed on for the seat of unearthly tranquillity had been an old haunt of lions, and the mighty herd were now roused from their noonday slumbers. Nothing could be grander or more terrible than this disturbed majesty of the forest kings. In every variety of savage passion, from terror to fury, they plunged, tore, and yelled; dashed through the lake, burst through the thicket, rushed up the hills, or stood baying and roaring in defiance, as if against a coming invader; their numbers were immense, for the rareness of shade and water had gathered them from every quarter of the desert.

While I stood clinging to my perilous hold, and fearful of attracting their gaze by the slightest movement, the source of the commotion appeared, in the shape of a Roman soldier issuing, spear in hand, through a ravine at the farther side of the valley. He was palpably unconscious of the formidable place into which he was entering, and the gallant clamor of voices through the hills showed that he was followed by others as bold and as unconscious of their danger as himself.

A Savage Conflict

But his career was soon closed; his horse's feet had scarcely touched the turf, when a lion was fixed with fang and claw on the creature's loins. The rider uttered a cry of horror, and for an instant sat helplessly gazing at the open jaws behind him. I saw the lion gathering up his flanks for a second bound, but the soldier, a figure of gigantic strength, grasping the nostrils of the monster with one hand, and with the other shortening his spear, drove the steel at one resistless thrust into the lion's forehead. Horse, lion, and rider fell, and continued struggling together.

In the next moment a mass of cavalry came thundering down the ravine. They had broken off from their march, through the accident of rousing a straggling lion, and followed him in the giddy ardor of the chase. But the sight now before them was enough to appal the boldest intrepidity. The valley was filled with the vast herd; retreat was impossible, for the troopers came still pouring in by the only pass, and from the sudden descent of the glen, horse and man were rolled head foremost among the lions; neither man nor monster could retreat.

The conflict was horrible; the heavy spears of the legionaries plunged through bone and brain; the lions, made more furious by wounds, sprang upon the powerful horses and tore them to the ground, or flew at the troopers' throats, and crushed and dragged away cuirass and buckler. The valley was a struggling heap of human and savage battle; man, lion, and charger writhing and rolling in agonies until their forms were undistinguishable. The groans and cries of the legionaries, the screams of the mangled horses, and the roars and howlings of the lions, bleeding with sword and spear, tearing the dead, darting up the sides of the hills in terror, and rushing down again with the fresh thirst of gore, baffled all conception of fury and horror. But man was the conqueror at last; the savages, scared by the spear, and thinned in their numbers, made a rush in one body toward the ravine, overthrew everything in their way, and burst from the valley, awaking the desert for many a league with their roar.

The troopers, bitterly repenting their rash exploit, gathered

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The lions, made more furious by wounds, sprang upon the powerful horses.

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up the remnants of their dead on litters of boughs, and leaving many a gallant steed to feast the vultures, slowly retired from the place of carnage.

The spot to which I clung made ascent or descent equally difficult, and during their extraordinary contest I continued embedded in the foliage, and glad to escape the eye of man and brute alike. But the troop were now gone; beneath me lay nothing but a scene of blood, and I began to wind my way to the summit. A menace from below stopped me. A solitary horseman had galloped back to give a last look to this valley of death; he saw me climbing the hill, saw that I was not a Roman, and in the irritation of the hour, made no scruple of sacrificing a native to the manes of his comrades. The spear followed his words and plowed the ground at my side. His outcry brought back a dozen of his squadron; I found myself about to be assailed by a general discharge. Escape on foot was impossible, and I had no resource but to be speared, or to descend and give myself up to the soldiery.

It was to warn me of this hazard that the signals of my strange companion were made. He saw the advance of the Roman column along the plain. My suspicions of his honesty drove me directly into their road, and the chance of turning down the valley scarcely retarded the capture. On my first emerging from the hills, I must have been taken. However, my captors were in unusual ill-temper. As an Arab, too poor to be worth plundering or being made prisoner, I should have met only a sneer or an execration and been turned loose; but the late disaster made the turban and haik odious, and I was treated with the wrath due to a fellow conspirator of the lions. To my request that I should be suffered to depart in peace on my business, the most prompt denial was given; the story that I told to account for my travel in the track of the column was treated with the simplest scorn; I was pronounced a spy, and fairly told that my head was my own only till I gave the procurator whatever information it contained.

Yet I found one friend, in this evil state of my expedition. My barb, which I had given up for lost in the desert, or torn by the wild beasts, appeared on the heights overhanging our

A Jovial Captain

march, and by snuffing the wind, and bounding backward and forward through the thickets, attracted general attention. I claimed her, and the idea that the way-sore and rough-clothed prisoner could be the master of so noble an animal, raised scorn to its most peremptory pitch. In turn I demanded permission to prove my right, and called the barb. The creature heard the voice with the most obvious delight, bounded toward me, rubbed her head against me, and by every movement of dumb joy showed that she had found her master.

Still my requests for dismissal were idle; I talked to the winds; the rear squadrons of the column were in sight; there was no time to be lost. I was suffered to mount the barb, but her bridle was thrown across the neck of one of the troopers' horses, and I was marched along to death, or a tedious captivity. My blood boiled when I thought of what was to be done before the dawn. How miserable a proof had I given of the vigilance and vigor that were to claim the command of armies! I writhed in every nerve. My agitation at length caught the eye of a corpulent old captain, whose good-humored visage was colored by the deepest infusion of the grape. His strong Thracian charger was a movable magazine of the choicest Falernian; out of every crevice of his pack-saddle and accouterments peeped the head of a flask; and to judge by his frequent recourse to his stores, no man was less inclined to carry his baggage for nothing. Popularity, too, attended upon the captain, and a group of young patricians attached to the procurator's court were content to abate of their rank, and ride along with the old soldier, in consideration of his better knowledge of the grand military science, providing for the road.

In the midst of some camp story, which the majority received with peals of applause, the captain glanced upon me, and asking "whether I was not ill," held out his flask. I took it, and never did I taste draught so delicious. Thirst and hunger are the true secrets of luxury. I absolutely felt new life rushing into me with the wine.

"There," said the old man, "see how the fellow's eye sparkles. Falernian is the doctor, after all. I have had no

other those forty years. For hard knocks, hard watches, and hard weather, there is nothing like the true juice of the vine. Try it again, Arab."

I declined the offer in civil terms.

"There," said he, "it has made the man eloquent. By Hercules, it would make his mare speak. And now that I look at her, she is as prettily made a creature as I have seen in Syria; her nose would fit in a drinking-cup. What is her price, at a word?"

I answered that "she was not to be sold."

"Well, well, say no more about it," replied the jovial old man; "I know you Arabs make as much of a mare as of a child, and I never meddle in family affairs."

A haughty-looking tribune, covered with embroidery and the other coxcombry of the court soldier, spurred his charger between us and uttered with a sneer:

"What, captain, by Venus and all the Graces! giving this beggar a lecture in philosophy or a lesson in politeness? If you will not have the mare, I will. Dismount, slave!"

The officers gathered to the front, to see the progress of the affair. I sat silent.

"Slave! do you hear? Dismount! You will lose nothing, for you will steal another in the first field you come to."

"I know but one race of robbers in Judea," replied I.

The old captain reined up beside me, and said in a whisper: "Friend, let him have the mare. He will pay you handsomely, and besides, he is the nephew of the procurator. It will not be wise in you to put him in a passion."

"That fellow never shall have her, tho he were to coin these sands into gold," replied I.

"Do you mean to call us robbers?" said the tribune, with a lowering eye.

"Do you mean to stop me on the high-road and take my property from me, yet expect that I shall call you anything else?" was the answer.

"Sententious rogues, those Arabs! Every soul of them has a point, or a proverb, on his tongue," murmured the captain to the group of young men, who were evidently

The Tribune's Rage

amused at seeing their unpopular companion entangled with me.

"Slave!" said the tribune fiercely, "we must have no more of this. You have been found lurking about the camp. Will you be hanged for a spy?"

"A spy!" said I—and the insult probably colored my cheek; "a spy has no business among the Romans."

"So," observed the captain, "the Arab seems to think that our proceedings are in general pretty palpable: slay, strip, and burn." He turned to the patrician tribune. "The fellow is not worth our trouble. Shall I let him go about his business?"

"Sir," said the tribune angrily, "it is your business to command your troop and be silent."

The old man bit his lip, and fell back to the line of his men. My taunter reined up beside me again.

"Do you know, robber, that I can order you to be speared on the spot for your lies?"

"No, for I have told you nothing but the truth of both of us. Such an order, too, would only prove that men will often bid others do what they dare not touch with a finger of their own."

The officers, offended at the treatment of their old favorite, burst into a laugh. The coxcomb grew doubly indignant.

"Strip the hound!" exclaimed he to the soldiers; "it is money that makes him insolent."

"Nature has done it, at least for one of us, without the expense of a mite," replied I calmly.

"Off with his turban! Those fellows carry coin in every fold of it."

The officers looked at each other in surprise; the captain hardly suppressed a contemptuous execration between his lips. The very troopers hesitated.

"Soldiers!" said I, in the same unaltered tone, "I have no gold in my turban. An Arab is seldom one of those—the outside of whose head is better worth than the inside."

The perfumed and curled locks of the tribune, surmounted by a helmet, sculptured and plumed in the most extravagant

style, caught every eye; and the shaft, slight as it was, went home. The Tribune's Defeat

"I'll pluck the robber off his horse by the beard!" exclaimed the tribune, spurring his horse upon me and advancing his hand.

I threw open my robe, grasped my dagger, and sternly pronounced: "There is an oath in our line that the man who touches the beard of an Arab dies."

He was not prepared for the action, hesitated, and finally wheeled from me. The old captain burst out into an involuntary huzza.

"Take the beggar to the camp," said the tribune, as he rode away, "I hate all scoundrels"; and he glanced round the spectators.

"Then," exclaimed I, after him, as a parting blow, "you have at least one virtue, for you can never be charged with self-love."

This woman-war made me popular on the spot. The tribune had no sooner turned his horse's head than the officers clustered together in laughter. Even the iron visages of the troopers relaxed into grim smiles. The old jocular captain was the only one still grave.

"There rides not this day under the canopy of heaven," murmured he, "a greater puppy than Caius Sempronius Catulus, tribune of the thirteenth legion by his mother's morals and the Emperor's taste. Why did not the coxcomb stay at home, and show off his trappings among the supper-eaters of the Palatine? He might have powdered his ringlets with gold-dust, washed his hands in rose-water, and perfumed his handkerchief with myrrh as well there as here, for he does nothing else—except," and he clenched the heavy hilt of his falchion, "insult men who have seen more battles than he has seen years, who knew better service than bowing in courts, and the least drop of whose blood is worth all that will ever run in his veins. But I have not done with him yet. As for you, friend," said he, "I am sorry to stop you on your way; but as this affair will be magnified by that fool's tongue, you must be brought to the procurator. However, the

An Unpleasant Interview

camp is only a few miles off; you will be asked a few questions, and then left to follow your will."

He little dreamed how I recoiled from that interview.

To shorten the time of my delay, the good-natured old man ordered the squadron to mend their pace, and in half an hour we saw the noon encampment of my sworn enemy, lifting its white tops and scarlet flags among the umbrage of a forest, deep in the valley at our feet.

CHAPTER XXVII

The Escape of Salathiel, the Magician

Salathiel Again Faces Florus

THE squadron drew up at the entrance of the procurator's tent, and with a crowd of alarmed peasants captured in the course of the day, I was delivered over to be questioned by this man of terror. The few minutes which passed before I was called to take my turn were singularly painful. This was not fear, for the instant sentence of the ax would have been almost a relief from the hopeless and fretful thwartings sown so thickly in my path. But to have embarked in a noble enterprise, and to perish without use; to have arrived almost within sight of the point of my desires, and then, without striking a blow, to be given up to shame, stung me like a serpent.

My heart sprang to my lips when I heard myself called into the presence of Florus. He was lying upon a couch, with his never-failing cup before him, and turning over some papers with a shaking hand. Care or conscience had made ravages even in him since I saw him last. He was still the same figure of excess, but his cheek was hollow; the few locks on his head had grown a more snowy white, and the little pampered hand was as thin and yellow as the claw of the vulture that he so much resembled in his soul.

With his head scarcely lifted from the table, and with eyes that seemed half shut, he asked whence I had come and whither I was going. My voice, notwithstanding my attempt to disguise it, struck his acute ear. His native keenness was awake at once. He darted a fiery glance at me, and, striking his hand on the table, exclaimed: "By Hercules, it is the Jew!" My altered costume again perplexed him.

"Yet," said he in soliloquy, "that fellow went to Nero, and must have been executed. Ho! send in the tribune who took him."

Malatbiel the Plunderer

Catulus entered, and his account of me was, luckily, contemptuous in the extreme. I was "a notorious robber, who had stolen a handsome horse, perfectly worthy of the stud of the procurator."

I panted with the hope of escape, and was gradually moving to the door.

"Stand, slave!" cried Florus, "I have my doubts of you still, and as the public safety admits of no mistake I have no alternative. Tribune, order in the lictors. He must be scourged into confession."

The lictors were summoned, and I was to be torn by Roman torturers.

A tumult now arose outside, and a man rushed in with the lictors, exclaiming: "Justice, most mighty Florus! By the majesty of Rome, and the magnanimity of the most illustrious of governors, I call for justice against my plunderer, my undoer, the robber of the son of El Hakim, of his most precious treasure."

Florus recognized the clamorer as an old acquaintance, and desired him to state his complaint, and with as much brevity as possible.

"Last night," said the man, "I was the happy possessor of a mare, fleet as the ostrich and shapely as the face of beauty. I had intended her as a present for the most illustrious of procurators, the great Florus, whom the gods long preserve! In the hour of my rest, the spoiler came, noiseless as the fall of the turtle's feather, cruel as the viper's tooth. When I arose the mare was gone. I was in distraction. I tore my beard; I beat my head upon the ground; I cursed the robber wherever he went, to the sun-rising or the sun-setting, to the mountains or the valleys. But fortune sits on the banner of my lord the procurator, and I came for hope of his conquering feet. In passing through the camp, what did I see but my treasure, the delight of my eyes, the drier up of my tears! I have come to claim justice and the restoration of my mare, that I may have the happiness to present her to the most renowned of mankind."

I had been occupied with the thought whether I should

burst through the lictors or rush on the procurator. But the length and loudness of this outcry engrossed every one. The orator was my friend the beggar! He pointed fiercely to me. If looks could kill, he would not have survived the look that I gave the traitor in return.

"There," said Florus, "is your plunderer. Sabat, have you ever seen him before?"

The beggar strode insolently toward me.

"Seen him before! aye, a hundred times. What! Ben Ammon, the most notorious thief from the Nile to the Jordan! My lord, every child knows him. Ha, by the gods of my fathers, by my mother's bosom, by shaft and by shield, he has stolen more horses within the last twenty years than would remount all the cavalry from Beersheba to Damascus! It was but last night that, as I was leading my mare, the gem of my eyes, my pearl——"

I now began to perceive the value of my eloquent friend's interposition.

"An Arab horse-thief! That alters the case," said the procurator. "Ho! did you not say that the mare was intended for me? Lictor, go and bring this wonder to the door."

The voluble son of El Hakim followed the lictor, and returned, crying out more furiously than before against me. His "pearl, the delight of his eyes, was spoiled—was utterly unmanagable. I had put some of my villainous enchantments upon her, for which I was notorious."

The procurator's curiosity was excited; he rose and went to take a view of the enchanted animal. I followed, and certainly nothing could be more singular than the restiveness which the son of El Hakim contrived to make her exhibit. She plunged, she bounded, bit, reared, and flung out her heels in all directions. Every attempt to lead or mount her was foiled in the most complete yet most ludicrous manner. The young cavalry officers came from all sides, and could not be restrained from boisterous laughter, even by the presence of the procurator. Florus himself at last became among the loudest. Even I, accustomed as I was to daring horsemanship, was surprised at the eccentric agility of this unlucky

The Accuser's Warning

rider. He was alternately on the animal's back and under her feet; he sprang upon her from behind, he sprang over her head, he stood upon the saddle, but all in vain; he had scarcely touched her when she threw him up in the air again, amid the perpetual roar of the soldiery.

At length, with a look of dire disappointment, he gave up the task, and, as scarcely able to drag his limbs along, prostrated himself before Florus, praying that he would order the Arab thief to unsay the spells that had turned "the gentlest mare in the world into a wild beast." The consent was given with a haughty nod, and I advanced to play my part in a performance, the object of which I had no conception. The orator delivered the barb to me with a look so expressive of cunning, sport, and triumph, that perplexed as I was, I could not avoid a smile.

My experiment was rapidly made. The mare knew me, and was tractable at once. This only confirmed the charge of my necromancy. But the son of El Hakim professed himself altogether dissatisfied with so expeditious a process, and demanded that I should go through the regular steps of the art. In the midst of the fiercest reprobation of my unhallowed dealings, a whisper from him put me in possession of his mind.

I now went through the process used by the traveling jugglers, and if the deepest attention of an audience could reward my talents, mine received unexampled reward. My gazings on the sky, whisperings in the barb's ear, grotesque figures traced on the sand, wild gestures and mysterious jargon, thoroughly absorbed the intellects of the honest legionaries. If I had been content with fame, I might have spread my reputation through the Roman camps as a conjurer of the first magnitude. I was, however, beginning to be weary of my exhibition, and longed for the signal, when Sabat approached, and loudly testifying that I had clearly performed my task, threw the bridle over the animal's head and whispered, "Now!"

My heart panted; my hand was on the mane; I glanced round to see that all was safe, before I gave the spring, when Florus screamed out:

"The Jew! by Tartarus, it is the Jew himself. Drag down the circumcised dog." A Lesson in Horse-Stealing

With cavalry on every side of me, forcible escape was out of the question.

"Undone, undone!" were the words of my wild friend, as he passed me. And when I saw him once more in the most earnest conversation with Florus, I concluded that the discovery was complete. I was in utter despair. I stood sullenly waiting the worst, and gave an internal curse to the more than malevolence of fortune.

The conversation continued so long that the impatience of those around me began to break out.

"On what possible subject can the procurator suffer that mad fellow to have so long an audience?" said a young patrician.

"On every possible subject, I should conceive, from the length of the conference," was the reply.

"Florus knows his man," said a third; "that mad fellow is a regular spy, and receives more of the Emperor's coin in a month than we do in a year."

The tribune now broke into the circle, and with a look of supreme scorn, affectedly exclaimed: "Come, knight of the desert, sovereign of the sands, let us have a specimen of your calling. Stand back, officers; this egg of Ishmael is to quit plunder so soon that he would probably like to die as he lived—in the exercise of his trade. Here, slave, show us the most approved method of getting possession of another man's horse."

I stood in indignant silence. The tribune threatened. A thought struck me; I bowed to the command, let the barb loose, and proceeded according to the theory of horse-stealing. I approached noiselessly, gesticulated, made mystic movements, and gibbered witchcraft as before. The animal, with natural docility, suffered my experiments. I continued urging her toward the thinner side of the circle.

"Now, noble Romans," said I, "look carefully to the next spell, for it is the triumph of the art."

Curiosity was in every countenance. I made a genuflexion

The Tribune Outborne

to the four points of the compass, devoted a gesture of peculiar solemnity to the procurator's tent, and while all eyes were drawn in that direction, sprang on the barb's back and was gone like an arrow.

I heard a clamor of surprise, mingled with outrageous laughter, and looking round, saw the whole crowd of the loose riders of the encampment in full pursuit up the hill. Florus was at his tent door, pointing toward me with furious gestures. The trumpets were calling, the cavalry mounting; I had roused the whole activity of the little army.

The slope of the valley was long and steep, and the heavy horsemanship of the legionaries, who were perhaps not very anxious for my capture, soon threw them out. A little knot of the more zealous alone kept up a pursuit, from which I had no fears. An abrupt rock in the middle of the ascent at length hid them from me. To gain a last view of the camp, I doubled round the rock and saw, a few yards below me, the tribune, with his horse completely blown. I owed him a debt, which I had determined to discharge at the earliest possible time, partly on my own account, and partly on that of the old captain. I darted upon him. He was all astonishment; a single buffet from my naked hand knocked the helpless taunter off his charger.

"Tribune," cried I, as he lay upon the ground, "you have had one specimen of my art to-day, now you shall have another. Learn in future to respect an Arab."

I caught his horse's bridle, gave the animal a lash, and we bounded away together. The scene was visible to the whole camp; the troopers, who had reined up on the declivity, gave a roar of merriment, and I heard the old corpulent captain's laugh above it all.

CHAPTER XXVIII

The Power of a Beggar

I HAD escaped, but the delay was ruinous. The sun sank when I reached the brow of the mountain, and Masada lay many a weary mile forward. I cast off the tribune's horse, thus giving his insolent master evidence that I did not understand the main point of my trade, and stood pondering to what point of the mighty ridge that rose blue along the horizon I should turn, when, in the plunge of the horse as he felt himself at liberty, his saddle came to the ground. The possibility of its containing reports of the state of the enemy led me to examine its pockets; they were stuffed with letters worthy of the highest circles of Italian high life; the ill-spelled registers of an existence at a loss how to lose its time; of libertinism sick of indulgence, and of pecuniary embarrassment driven to the most hopeless and whimsical resources.

The Contents of the Saddle-Bag

A glance at a few of those epistles was enough, and I scattered into the air the reputations of half the high-born maids and matrons of Rome; but as I was turning away with an instinctive exclamation of scorn at this compendium of patrician life, my eye was caught by a letter addressed to the governor of Masada. In opening it, I committed no violation of diplomacy, for it held no secret other than an angry remission of his allegiance by some wearied fair one, who announced her intended marriage with the tribune.

My revenge was thus to go further than my intent, for I deprived him of the personal triumph of delivering this calamitous despatch to his rival. Yet, on second thought, conceiving that some cipher might lurk under its absurdity, I secured the paper, and giving the rein, left the whole secret correspondence of debt, libel, and love to the delight of man-

The Distant Sound of Strife

kind. I flew along; my indefatigable barb, as if she felt her master's anxieties, put forth double speed. But I had yet a fearful distance to traverse. The night came, but I had no time to think of rest or shelter. I pushed on. The wind rose and wrapt me in whirls of sand. I heard the roar of waters. The ground became fractured, and full of the loose fragments that fall from rocky hills. I found that I was at the foot of the ridge and had lost my way. In this embarrassment I trusted to the sagacity of my steed. But thirst led her directly to one of the mountain torrents, and the phosphoric gleam of the waters alone saved us both from a plunge over a precipice, deep enough to extinguish every appetite and ambition in the round of this bustling world.

To find a passage or an escape, I alighted. The torrent bellowed before me. A wall of rock rose on the opposite side. After long climbings and descents, I found that I had descended too deep to return. Oh, how I longed for the trace of man, for the feeblest light that ever twinkled from the cottage window! I felt the plague of helplessness. To attempt the torrent was impossible. To linger where I stood till dawn was misery.

What would be going on meanwhile? Perhaps, at the very time while I was standing in wretched doubt, imprisoned among those pestilent cliffs, the deed was doing. Constantius was, with ineffectual gallantry, assaulting the fortress; my brave kinsmen were sacrificing their lives under the Roman spears, and I was not there!

A fitful sound came mingling with the roar of the cataract; it swelled, and vanished like the rushings of the gale. A trumpet sounded, but so feebly that nothing but the keenness of an ear straining to catch the slightest sound could have distinguished it. I heard remote shouts; they deepened; the echo of trumpets followed.

"The assault has begun!" I thought. "The work of glory and of death was doing. Every instant cost a life. The hailstones that bruised me were not thicker than the arrows that were then smiting down my people. Yet there was I, like a wolf in the pitfall!"

Even where the combat was being fought, baffled my conception. It might be in the clouds or underground, on the opposite side of the black ridge before me, or many a league beyond the reach of my exhausted limbs and drooping steed; all was darkness to the eye and to the mind. In the Torrent

A light flashed down a ravine leading into the heart of the mountains; another and another blazed. Masada stood upon the mountain's brow.

I instantly plunged into the torrent—was beaten down by the billows—was swept along through narrow channels of rock, until, half-suffocated, I was hurled up against the opposite cliff. Wet and weary, I less climbed than tore my way upward. But the torrent had borne me far below the ravine. Before me was a gigantic rampart of rock. But the time was flying. I dragged myself up to the face of the precipice by the chance brushwood. I swung from point to point by a few projecting branches that broke away almost in my grasp, until, with my hands excoriated, my limbs stiff and bleeding, and my head reeling, I reached the pinnacle.

Was I under the dominion of a spell? Was the power of some fiend raised to mock me? All was darkness as far as the eye could pierce; the heaviest veil of midnight hung upon the earth. There was utter silence. Not the slightest sound reached the ear.

For a while, the thought of some strange illusion was paramount; then came the frightful idea that the illusion was in myself; that in the effort to gain the ascent, I had strained eye and ear until I could neither hear nor see; that I was still within sight and sound of battle, but insensible to the impressions of the external world forever. Immortality under this exclusion! A deathlessness of the deaf and blind! The thought struck me with a force inconceivable by all minds but one sentenced like mine.

In my despair I cried aloud. A flood of joy rushed into my heart when I heard my voice answered, tho it was but by the neigh of my barb below, which probably felt itself as ill-placed as its master. I now used my ear as the guide, and cautiously descending the farther side of the ridge was

Constantius Tells of the Attack

soon on comparatively level ground, the remnant of a forest. My foot struck against a human body; I spoke; the answer was a groan, and an entreaty that I should bear a small packet, which was put into my hands, "to the prince of Naphtali!" In alarm and astonishment, I raised the sufferer, gave him some water from my flask, and after many an effort, in which I thought that life would depart every moment, he told me that "he was the unfortunate leader of the assault of Masada." Constantius lay in my arms!

"Where I am," said he, as he slowly recovered his senses, "how I came here, or anything but that we are undone, I can not conceive. My last recollection was of fixing a ladder to the inner rampart. We had made our way good so far without loss. The garrison was weakened by detachments sent out to plunder. I attacked at midnight. To surprise a Roman fortress was, I well knew, next to impossible; and no man ever found a Roman garrison without bravery. But our bold fellows did wonders. Everything was driven from the first rampart; we made more prisoners than we knew what to do with, and in the midst of all kinds of resistance, we laid our ladders to the second wall. But the garrison were still too strong for us. Our easy conquest of the first line might have been a snare, for the battlements before us exhibited an overwhelming force. We fought on, but the ladders were broken with showers of stones from the engines. The business looked desperate, but I had made up my mind not to go back, after having once got in; and rallying the men, I carried a ladder through a storm of lances and arrows, to the foot of the main tower. I was bravely followed, and we were within grasp of the battlement when I saw a cohort rush out from a sally-port below. This was fatal; the foot of the rampart was cleared at once; the ladders were flung down; and I suppose it is owing to the ill-judged fidelity of some of my followers that I am unfortunate enough to find myself here and alive."

During the endless hours of this miserable night, I labored with scarcely a hope to keep life in my heroic son. My coming had saved him. The exposure and his wounds must have

destroyed him before morning. We consulted as to our next course. I suggested the possibility of gaining the fortress by a renewal of the attack, while the garrison was unprepared, or perhaps indulging in carousal after success. The necessity of some attempt was strongly in my mind, and I expressed my determination to run the hazard, if I could find where the remnant of our troop had taken refuge. But this was the difficulty. Signals of any kind must rouse the vigilance of the Romans. The fortress was above our heads, and to collect the men during the night was impossible.

Salathiel's Friend, the Beggar

While I watched the restless tossings of Constantius, a light stole along the ground at a distance. My first idea was that a Roman patrol was coming to extinguish our last remains of hope. But the light was soon perceived to be in the hand of some one cautious of discovery. To keep its bearer at a distance, I followed the track and grasped him.

"I surrender," said the captive, perfectly at his ease; "long life to the Emperor!" He lifted the lamp to my face and burst into laughter. "May I have a Roman falchion through me," said he, "but I think we were born under the same planet. By all the food that has entered my lips this day, I took your highness for a thief, and, pardon the word, for a Roman one. I have been running after you the whole day and night."

He contined to talk and writhe, with a kind of mad merriment. I could not obtain an answer to my questions, of what led him there, how he could guide us out of the forest, or what news he brought from the procurator. He less walked than danced before me through the thickets, as our scene with Florus recurred to his fantastic mind.

"Never was trick so capital as your escape," he exclaimed. "I would have given an eye or an arm, things rather an impediment to a beggar, I allow; but it would have been worth a kingdom to see, as I saw, the faces of the whole camp, procurator, officers, troopers, and all, down to the horse-boys, on your slipping through their fingers in such first-rate style. I have done clever things in my time, but never, no never, shall I equal that way of making five thousand men at once look

The Physician

like five thousand fools. I own I thought that you would do something brilliant, and it was for that purpose that I tried to draw off the eye of that scoundrel Florus, for, sot as he is, there are not ten in Palestine keener in all points where roguery is concerned. I caught hold of his robe, told him a ready lie of the largest size about a discovery of coin in Jerusalem, and while he was nibbling at the bait I heard the uproar. You were off; I could not help laughing in his illustrious face. He kicked me from him, and foaming with rage, ordered every man and horse out after your highness. But I saw at a glance that you had the game in your own hands. You skimmed away like a bird; an eagle could not have got up that long hill in finer condition. Away you went, bounding from steep to steep, like a stone from a sling; you cut the air like a shaft. I have seen many a mare in my time, but as for the equal of yours—why a pair of wings would be of no use to her. She is a paragon, a bird of paradise, an ostrich on four legs, a——"

I checked his volubility and led him to the rough bedside of Constantius. I could not have found a better auxiliary. He knew every application used in the medicine of the time, and, to give him credit on his own showing, all diseases found in him an enemy worth all the doctors of Asia.

"He had traveled for his knowledge; he had fought with death from the Nile to the Ganges, and could swear that the sharks and crocodiles owed him a grudge throughout the world. He had cured rajahs and satraps till he made himself unpopular in every court where men looked for vacancies; had kept rich old men out of their graves until there was a general conspiracy of heirs to drive him out of the country; and had poured life into so many dying husbands that the women made a universal combination against his own."

This flow of panegyric, however, did not impede his present services. He applied his herbs and bandages with professional dexterity, and kindling a fire, prepared some food, which went further to cheer the patient than even his medicine. He still talked away like one to whom words were a necessary escape for his surcharge of animal spirits.

"He knew everything in physic. He had studied in Egypt, and could compound the true essential extract of mummy with any man that wore a beard, from the Cataracts to the bottom of the Delta. He once walked to the Mountains of the Moon to learn the secret of powdered chrysolite. On the Himalaya he picked up his knowledge of the bezoar, and a year's march through sands and snows rewarded him at once with a bag of the ginseng, most marvelous of roots, and the sight of the wall of China, most endless of walls." The Leech's Skill

How he stooped to veil this accumulation of knowledge in rags, he did not condescend to explain. But his skill, so far, was certainly admirable, and my brave Constantius recovered with a suddenness that surprised me. With his strength his hopes returned.

"Oh," exclaimed he, waking from a refreshing sleep, "that I were once again at the foot of the rampart with the ladder in my hand!"

"By my father's beard," replied the leech, "you are much better where you are; for observe, tho I can go further than any doctor between the four rivers, yet I never professed to cure the dead. Take Masada by scale! Ha! ha! take the clouds by scale! You would have found three walls within the one to which they decoyed you. Herod was the prince of builders, and could have so built as to have kept out everything, except the champion that carries no arms but a scythe."

"Then you know Masada?" interrupted I eagerly.

"Know it, yes; every loophole, window, door—aye, and dungeon—from one end of it to the other."

Still, my escape from the camp was so congenial to his ideas of pleasantry that it mingled with all his topics. War and politics went for nothing compared with the adroitness of eluding Roman insolence.

"By Jove!" said he, "when I played my tricks with that pearl of pearls, that supreme of horseflesh, your barb, I was clumsy; I played the clown; you beat me hollow; it was matchless; it was my purse in prospect of your generosity to its emptiness this night"—he made a profound obeisance;

His Knowledge of Masada

"to see those fellows panting up the hill after you, nearly killed me."

"But the fortress?"

"Oh! as to the fortress, the notion of attacking it was madness. I had my doubts of your intention, and broke loose from the camp to give you the benefit of my advice. But the tribune; ha, ha! never was coxcomb so rightly served. You won the heart of the whole legion by the single blow that spared him the trouble of sitting his horse. The troopers could not keep their saddles for laughing; and as for the fat old captain, I was only afraid that he would roar himself out of the world. I owed my escape partly to him, and his last words were: 'Rascal, if you ever fall in with the Arab, whom I suspect to be as pleasant a rogue as yourself, tell him that I wish I had a dozen such in my squadron.'"

"But is there any possibility of knowing the present state of the garrison?"

"Aye, there is the misfortune. Yesterday I could have got in, and got out again, like a wild-cat. But, after this night's visit, it is not too much to suppose that they may be a little more select in their hospitality. The governor has a slight correspondence of his own to carry on; a trifle in the way of trade; I had the honor to be smuggler extraordinary to his Mightiness, and, as in state secrets everything ought to be kept from the vulgar, my path in and out was by a portcullis, far enough from gates and sentinels, through which portcullis I should have shown you the way, if the attack had waited for me a few hours longer. That chance is of course cut off now. But see, yonder comes the morning."

"Then we must move, or have the garrison on us."

"I forbid that maneuver," interrupted the fellow, with easy audacity.

Constantius and I, in equal surprise, bade him be silent. Yet the quietness with which he took the rebuke propitiated me, and I asked his reason.

"Nothing more than that if you stir you are ruined. The hare is safest near the kennel. The outlaw sleeps sounder in the magistrate's stable than he ever slept in his den. I once

escaped hanging by coolly walking into a jail. There stands Masada!" and he pointed to what looked to me a heap of black clouds gathered on the mountain's brow. Salathiel Ca an Ally

"Not a soul that you have left alive there will dream of your being within a stone's throw. The copse is thick enough to hide a man from everything but a creditor, an evil conscience, or a wife; stir out of it, and they are on your heels. I dislike them so heartily that I hope never to have the honor of their attendance. But you are not mad enough to think of trying them again?"

"Mad fellow!" I exclaimed, "you forget in whose presence you are."

He continued making some new arrangement of the bandages on his patient's wounds, and without taking the slightest notice of my displeasure, cheered his work with a song.

"Mad or wise," said I in soliloquy, "I shall lie in the ditch of that fortress, or in its citadel, before next sunrise."

"You may lie in both," said the beggar, pursuing his occupation and his song. "Mad! Why not?—all the world is in the same way. The Emperor is mad enough to stay where men have hands and knives. His people are mad enough to let their throats be cut by him. Florus is mad enough to sleep another night in Palestine. You are mad enough to attack his garrison; and I—am mad enough to go along with you."

"You are a singular being. But will you hazard your neck for nothing?"

"Custom makes everything easy," observed he, spanning his muscular neck with his hand; "I have been so many years within sight of the cord, and all other expeditious modes of paying the only debt I ever intend to pay, and that only because it is the last, that I care as little about the venture as any broken gambler about his last coin. Well then, my plan is this: I must get into the town; you must gather your troop without noise and be ready for my signal, a light from one of the towers. A false attack must be made on the gates, a true attack must be made by the portcullis, which, if

it be not stopped up, I will unlock; and your highness may eat your next supper off the governor's plate. There's a plan for you! I should have been a general. But merit—aye, there's the rub—merit is like the camel's lading: it stops him at the gate, while the empty slip in. It is like putting wings upon one's shoulders, when the race is to be run upon the ground. Too much brain in a man is like too much bend in a bow; the bow either breaks, or sends the arrow a mile beyond the mark. Genius, my prince, is——"

I interrupted the general in his progress into the philosopher, and demanded whether the renewed vigilance of the fortress would not require some additional expedient for his entry. He struck his forehead; the thought came, as the flint gives its spark, and he produced a highly ornamented tablet.

"This," said he, "I ought to employ in your service, for if you had not knocked down the tribune I could never have picked it up. In making my run over the mountain, I struck upon his correspondence. Oh! the curse of curiosity! if I had not stopped to delight myself with the whole scandal of Rome, I should have been here in time. But I lingered, lost an hour in laughing, and when I set out in the dusk lost my way, for the first time in my life. Before setting off, however, I wrote a letter, ridiculing Florus in all points, burlesquing the people about him, scoffing at everybody in the most heroic style; and having subscribed the name of the unlucky tribune, addressed it to one of the most notorious personages in all Italy, and placed it where it is sure to be seen, and as sure to be carried to the most noble of procurators. Now could I not begin a correspondence with the governor, and act the courier myself? Yet, to hit upon the subject——" He paused.

The letter that I had found occurred to me. I showed it to our adroit friend. He was in ecstasies. He kissed it over and over, and played some of those antics which had already made me almost half doubt his sanity. He flung away the tablet.

"Go," said he; "fiction is a fine thing in its way. But give me fact when I want to entrap a great man. He is so little

used to truth that the least atom of it is a spell; the fresh bait will carry the largest hook. Aye, this is the letter for us; it has the sincerity of the sex, when they are determined to jilt a man; its abuse will cover me from top to toe with the cloak of a true ambassador." The Beggar Confidence

"But the unpopularity of your credentials," said I laughingly.

"Let the potentate by whom they are sent settle that affair with the potentate by whom they are received," replied he.

"You will be hanged."

"I shall first get in."

CHAPTER XXIX

Prisoners in a Labyrinth

Before the Fortress

THE day passed anxiously, for every sound of the huge fortress was heard in the thicket. The creaking of machines, brought up to the walls against future assault; the rattling of hammers; the rolling of wagons loaded with materials for the repair of the night's damage; the calls of trumpet and clarion, and the march of patrols, rang perpetually in our ears. The depth of the copse justified the beggar's generalship, and the son of El Hakim proved himself a master of the art of castrametation. Nothing could exceed his alertness in threading the mazes of this dwarf forest, where a wolf could scarcely have made progress and where a lynx would have required all his eyes.

On my asking how he contrived to find his way through this labyrinth, he told me, that "for making one's way in woods and elsewhere, there was nothing like a familiarity with smuggling and affairs of state."

"The man," continued he, "who has driven a trade in everything, from pearls to pistachios, without leave of the customs, can not be much puzzled by thickets; and the man who has contrived to climb into confidence at court must have had a talent for keeping his feet in the most slippery spots, or he never could have mounted the back stairs."

He collected the scattered troop, of whom but few had fallen, tho nearly one half were made prisoners; they were eager to attempt the rampart again, all boldly attributing their failure to accident, and all thirsting alike for the rescue of their comrades and for revenge. The letter was given to our emissary, and I ascended the loftiest of the mountain pinnacles, to examine for myself the nature of the ground. From my height the view was complete; the whole

interior of the fortress lay open, and in the same glance I saw the grandeur of design which Greek taste could stamp even upon the strength of military architecture, and the utter hopelessness of any direct assault upon Masada" by less than an army.

Who but he that has actually been in the same situation, can conceive the feelings with which I gazed! Below me was the spot in which a few hours must see me conqueror or nothing! On that battlement I might, before another morn, be stretched in blood! On that tower I might be fixed a horrid spectacle! Nature is irresistible, and her workings, for a while, overpowered even the belief in my mysterious sentence. The thought has always terribly returned, but the moment of energy has ever extinguished it; the hurrying and swelling current of my heart rolled over it, as the winter torrent rushes over the tomb on its brink. The melancholy memorial was there, sure to reappear with the first subsiding, but lost while the flood of feeling whirled along. Every group of soldiery that sang, or gamed, or gazed, along the ramparts, under the bright and quiet day which followed so fearful a night; every archer pacing on his tower; every change of the guard; every entering courier, was visible to me, and all were objects of keen interest.

At length my courier came. I saw his approach from a pass of the mountains at the remotest point from our cover, his well-contrived exhaustion, and the fearless impudence with which he beguiled the sulky guard at the gate, and stalked before the centurion by whom he was brought to the governor.

With what eyes of impatience I now watched the sun. As the hour of fate approached, the fever of the mind grew. To defer the attack beyond the night was to abandon it, for by morn the troops under Florus must reach Masada. Yet a strange sensation, a chilliness of heart sometimes came on me, in which my hands were as feeble as an infant's. Nothing tries the soul more deeply than this concentration of its fortunes into a few moments. The man sees himself standing on the edge of a precipice, down which there is no second step. But the thought of returning errandless and humil-

man ...ment iated, and this, too, from my first enterprise, was intolerable. I made my decision.

From that instant I breathed freely, my strength returned, hope glowed in my bosom, and clinging to the granite spire of the mountain, I looked down upon the haughty stronghold, like its evil genius descending from the clouds. The sun touched the western ridge. A horseman came at full speed across the plain at its foot and entered the fortress. He evidently brought news of importance, for the troops were hurried under arms, flags hoisted on the ramparts, and the walls lined with archers. All was military bustle.

My first conception was, that my emissary had betrayed us, and that we were about to be attacked. I plunged from the pinnacle, and was following the windings of the goat track to our lair, when I saw the rising of a cloud of dust in the distance. It moved with rapidity, and soon developed its contents. Intelligence of the assault had reached Florus. His sagacity saw what perils turned on the loss of the fortress; he shook off his indolence, and came without delay to its succor. Banners, helmets, and scarlet cloaks poured across the plain. A torrent of brass, burning and flashing in the sunbeam, continued to roll down the defile, and before the evening star glittered the whole cavalry of the fifteenth legion was trampling over the drawbridge of Masada. Here was the death-blow. My enterprise was henceforth tenfold more hopeless; but with me the time for prudence was past. If the reenforcement had arrived but an hour before, I should probably have given up the attempt in despair. But my mind was now fixed; I had made an internal vow, and if the whole host of Rome was crowded within the walls beneath me, I should have hazarded the assault.

I descended, found my troop collected, and, to my alarm and vexation, Constantius, enfeebled as he was, obstinately determined to assault the rampart again. With the daring of his enthusiastic heart he told me that unless I suffered him to attempt the retrieval of his defeat, he felt it impossible to survive.

"Shame and grief," said he, "are as deadly as the sword,

and never will I return to the face of her whom I love, or of the family whom I honor, unless I can return with the consciousness of having at least deserved to be successful."

Against this I reasoned, but reasoned in vain. We finally divided our followers. I gave him the attack of the rampart, which was to be the place of his triumph or his grave; flung myself into his embrace, and listened to his parting steps with a heart throbbing at every tread. I then moved round the foot of the mountain toward the secret passage. The night fell as dark as we could wish. I waited impatiently for the signal, a light from the walls. Yet no signal twinkled from wall or tower, and I began to distrust again; but while I lingered, a shout told me that Constantius was already engaged.

"Let what will, come," exclaimed I; "onward!"

We scrambled up the face of the rock, and at length found the entrance of the subterranean. It was so narrow that even in the daytime it must have been invisible from below. A low iron door a few yards within the fissure was the first obstacle. To beat it down might alarm the garrison. The passage only allowed us to advance one by one. I led the way, hatchet in hand. A few blows broke the stones round the lock; the door gave way, and we all crept in. In this manner we wound along for a distance which I began to think endless. The passage was singularly toilsome. We descended steep paths, in which it was with the utmost difficulty that we could keep our feet; we heard the rush of waters through the darkness; blasts of bitter wind swept against us; the thick and heavy air that closed round us after them almost impeded our breathing; and from time to time sulfurous vapors gave the fearful impression that we had lost our way and were actually in the bowels of a burning mine.

My hunters still held on, but the mere fatigue of struggling through this poisoned atmosphere was fast exhausting their courage. I cheered them with what hopes I could, but never was my imagination more barren. I heard, at every step I took, fewer feet following me. The pestilential air was beginning to act even upon myself; but the great stake was

A Dazzling Sight

playing above, and onward I must go. I dared not speak louder than a whisper; soon no whisper responded to mine. I tottered on, until overpowered by the feeling that our sacrifice was in vain, a sensation like that of a sickly propensity to sleep bound up my faculties; whether I slept or fainted, I for a time lost all recollection.

A roar, like thunder overhead, roused me. A sight, the most superb, burst on my dazzled eyes; a roof of seeming gold, arched so high that even its splendor was partially dimmed; walls of apparent diamond, pillared with a thousand columns of every precious gem; whole shafts of emerald; pavilions of jasper; a floor, as far as the glance could pierce, studded with amethyst and ruby; apparent treasures, to which the accumulated spoils of the Greek or the Persian were nothing; the finest devices of the most exquisite art, mingled with the most colossal forms which wealth could wear; opulence in its massive and negligent grandeur; opulence in its delicate and almost spiritualized beauty, were before me. A slender flame burning at the foot of an idol lighted up this stupendous temple.

I was alone, but the orifice by which I had entered was visible; the light shot far down into it, and I soon brought forward the greater number of my troop. All were equally wrapt in wonder, and the superstitious feelings, which the presence of the Roman and Syrian idolaters had partially generated even in the Jewish mind, began to startle those brave men.

"We had, perhaps, come into forbidden ground; the gods of the earth, whether gods or demons, were powerful, and we stood in the violated center of the mountain."

For the first time, I found the failure of my influence. A few adhered to me, but the majority calmly declared that, however fearless of man, they dared go no farther. I threw myself on the ground before the entrance of the cavern, and desired them to consummate their crime by trampling on their leader. But they were determined to retire. I taunted them, I adjured them, I poured out the most vehement reproaches. They stepped over me as I lay at the mouth of the fissure,

and at length one and all left me to cry out in my dazzling solitude against the treachery of human faith and the emptiness of human wishes.

The roar again rolled above; I heard distant shouts and trumpets. In the sudden and desperate consciousness that all was now to be gained or lost, I rushed after the fugitives, to force them back. I plunged into the darkness, and grasped the first figure that I could overtake. My hand fell on the iron cuirass of a Roman! my blood ran chill. "Were we betrayed—decoyed into the bowels of the mountain to be massacred?"

The figure started from me. I gave a blind blow of the ax, and heard it crush through his helmet. The man fell at my feet. I wildly demanded, "How he came there, and how we might make our way into the light?"

"You are undone," said he faintly. "Your spy was seized by the procurator. Your attack was known, and the door of the subterranean left unguarded to entrap you. This passage was the entrance to a former mine, and in the mine is your grave."

The voice sank; he groaned, and was no more.

His words were soon confirmed by the hurried return of my men. They had found the passage obstructed by a portcullis, dropped since their entrance. Torches were seen through the fissures above, and the sound of arms rattled round us. The ambush was complete.

"Now," said I, "we have but one thing for it—the sword, first for our enemy, last for ourselves. If we must die, let us not die by Roman halters."

One and all, we rushed back into the mine. But we had now no leisure to look upon the beauty of those spars and crystals which under the light of the altar glittered and blushed with such gem-like radiance. From that altar now rose a pyramid of fire; piles of faggots, continually poured from a grating above, fed the blaze to intolerable fierceness. Smoke filled the mine. To escape was beyond hope. The single orifice had been already tried. Around us was a solid wall as old as the world. It was already heating with the

blaze; our feet shrank from the floor. The flame, shooting in a thousand spires, coiled and sprang against the roof, the walls, and the ground. To remain where we were, was to be burned to cinders. The catastrophe was inevitable.

In the madness of pain, I made a furious bound into the column of fire. All followed, for death was certain, and the sooner it came the better. With unspeakable feelings I saw, at the back of the mound of stone on which the faggots burned, an opening, hitherto concealed by the huge figure of the idol. We crowded into it; here we were at least out of reach of the flame. But what was our chance save that of a more lingering death? We hurried in; another portcullis stood across the passage! What was to be our fate but famine? We must perish in a lingering misery—of all miseries the most appalling, and with the bitter aggravation of perishing unknown, worthless, useless, stigmatized for slaves or dastards! What man of Israel would ever hear of our deaths? What chronicler of Rome would deign to vindicate our absence from the combat?

We were within hearing of that combat. The assault thundered more wildly than ever over our heads; the alternate shout of Jew and Roman descended to us. But where were we?—caged, dungeoned, doomed! If the earth had laid her treasures at my feet that night, I would have given them for one hour of freedom. Oh, for one struggle in daylight, to redeem my name and avenge my country!

The roar of battle suddenly sank. Was all lost? Constantius slain? for with life he would not yield. Was the whole hope of Judea crushed at a blow? I cried aloud to my followers to force the portcullis. They dragged and tore at the bars. But it was of a solid strength that not ten times ours could master.

In the midst of our hopeless labors, the sound of heavy blows above caught my ear, and fragments of rock fell in; the blows were continued. Was this but a new expedient to crush or suffocate us? A crevice at length showed the light of a torch overhead. I grasped the ax to strike a last blow at the gate and die. I heard a voice pronounce my name! Another

blow opened the roof. A face bent down, and a loud laugh proclaimed my crazy friend. The Rescue

"Ha!" said he, "are you there at last? You have had a hard night's work of it. But come up; I have an incomparable joke to tell you about the tribune and the procurator. Come up, my prince, and see the world."

I had no time to rebuke his jocularity. I climbed up the rugged side of the passage, and found myself still in a dungeon. To my look of disappointment, he gave no other answer than a laugh, and unscrewing a bar from the loophole above his head—

"It is my custom," said he, "to make myself at my ease, wherever I go; and as prisons fall to a man's lot, like other things, I like to be able to leave my mansion whenever I am tired of it."

"Forward, then," said I impatiently.

"Backward," said the beggar, with the most unruffled coolness. "That loophole is for me alone. I may be under the governor's care again, and I have shown it to you now merely as a curiosity. Drink, my brave fellows," said he, turning to the troop below, and giving them a skin of wine; "soldiers must have their comforts, my gallant prince, as well as beggars. If that villain procurator had not come by express (for no man alive is quicker to catch an idea where he is likely to gain), you should have been by this time sleeping in the governor's bed, and the governor probably supping with me. But all is fortune, good and bad, in this world. The procurator, putting your escape and mine together, began to think that his presence might be useful here, and the laziest rogue in Palestine came with a speed that might have done honor to the quickest, who stands before you in my person. I had gone on swimmingly with the governor, on the strength of your love-letter, angry as it made him. But the first sight of Florus put an end to my chance of opening the gates for your triumphal entry. I was tied, neck and heels, and flung here, to be gibbeted to-morrow morning. But that morning has not come yet."

He paced the cell uneasily. At length he sprang up, and

The Assault

looking from the loophole, whispered, "Now!" A low creaking sound of machinery followed.

"Down into the cavern," said he; "that accursed cohort has moved at last. Away, my prince, and seek your fortune."

I exhibited some reluctance to be engulfed again. But his countenance assumed a sudden sternness. His only word was, "Down!"

As we were parting he solemnly pronounced: "May whatever power befriends the righteous cause, and blasts the man of infamy and blood, send the lightnings before you!"

Tears stood in his uplifted eyes. His worn countenance flushed as he spoke the words. He seized a spear from a corner, and plunged after me into the cavern.

The portcullis had been drawn up by Sabat; the passage opened at the foot of the rampart. I could have rushed upon an army. But the hand of our guide was on my shoulder.

"Your attack," said he, "can be nothing, unless it be a surprise. Move along unseen, if possible, till you come to the flank of the first tower. There wait for my signal!" He was gone.

The roar of the assault swelled again, tho it was certainly receding. I climbed the rampart alone. The torches on a distant battlement showed me the Romans in force, and evidently making way. I could restrain myself no longer. I gave the word—concealed by the shadow of the colossal wall—fell upon the guard at the gate and cast it open! Constantius was the first who saw me. He sprang forward, with a cry of exultation. The Romans on the battlement feeling themselves cut off, were struck with panic, and threw down their arms; but we had more important objects, and rushed back to the citadel. Our work was not yet done; we were entangled in the streets and lost time. The garrison was strong, and fought like men who had no resource but in the sword.

We were pressed on all sides; an arrow lodged in my shoulder, and I could wield the ax no more. In a few discharges, every man round me was bruised or bleeding. I saw a Roman column hurrying along the rampart, whose

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I gave the word—fell upon the guard at the gate, and cast it open!

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charge must finish the battle at once. But a blaze sprang up in the rear of the enemy. Another and another followed. The governor's palace was on fire! The sight broke the Roman courage. Cries of "treachery" rang through the ranks; they turned, flung away spear and shield—and I was master of the strongest fortress in Palestine!

Master of Masada

CHAPTER XXX

The Revenge of a Victor

The Beggar's Garb

RESISTANCE was at an end, and we had now only to prevent the conflagration from snatching the prize out of our hands. The flames rose fiercely, and another hour might see the famous arsenal beyond the power of man. Leaving to Constantius the care of securing the prisoners, I entered the palace, followed by a detachment. In the tumult I had missed my deliverer, yet scarcely could think of him, or anything else, while the enemy were showering lances and shafts upon us. But now, some fears of his extravagance recurred to me, and I ordered strict search to be made for him. The fire had seized on but a wing of the palace and was soon extinguished. I was ascending the stairs when a figure bounded full against me from a side door. It was the beggar. His voice, however, was my only means of recognition, for his outward man had undergone a total change. He wore a rich cuirass and helmet, a Greek falchion glittered in his embroidered belt, a tissued mantle hung over his shoulder, and a spear ponderous, but inlaid and polished with the nicest art, was brandished in his hand.

"What," said he, "is all over? May all the fogs of earth and skies cloud me, but I was born under the most malignant planet that ever did mischief; I left you only to do some business of my own; I failed there. My next business was to join and help you to give a lesson to those Roman hounds; or, if they were to give the lesson to us, take chance along with you and exhibit as a soldier. I ventured to borrow the governor's arms, as you see, but I am always unlucky."

"If it was you who set this roof on fire, your torch was worth an army."

"Aye, I never saw fire fail; no man is ashamed of running

away from a blaze; and I thought that the Romans were tired enough, to be glad of the excuse. But I had a point besides to carry. Florus is somewhere under these ceilings. I determined to burn him out, and pay home my long arrear, as he attempted to make his escape. But you have just extinguished the cleverest earthly contrivance for the discovery of rascal governors, and I must break an oath I made long ago, against his ever dying in his bed."

The Beggar Confronts Florus

"Florus here! then we must find him without delay. But who comes?"

At the word I seized a slave of the palace, attempting to escape. He begged hard for his life, and promised to conduct us where the procurator was concealed. We hurried on through a succession of winding passages; a strong door stopped us.

"There," said the slave.

"By the beard of my fathers, the wolf shall not be long in his den!" cried the son of El Hakim. "Procurator, your last crime is committed."

He threw himself against the door with prodigious force; the bars burst away, and before us lay the terror of Judea.

He was to be a terror no more. A cup, the inseparable amethystine cup, stood on the table beside his couch. He lay writhing in pain. His countenance wore the ghastliest hue of death. I bade him surrender. He smiled, took the cup in his trembling hand, and eagerly swallowed the remaining drops in its bottom.

"What! poison!" exclaimed my companion; "has the villain escaped me? Here is my planet again; never was man so unlucky. But he is not dead yet."

He drew his falchion, and lifted it up with the look of one about to offer a solemn sacrifice. I seized his arm.

"He is dying," said I; "he is beyond earthly vengeance."

The wretched criminal before us was nearly insensible to his brief preservation. The poison, acting upon a frame already broken with public and private anxieties, was making quick work, and the glazed eye, the fallen countenance, and the collapsed limb showed that his last hour was come.

The Death-Bed of Gessius Florus

"And this is the thing," soliloquized the son of El Hakim, "that men feared! In this senseless flesh was the power to make the free tremble for their freedom, and the slave curse the hour that he was born. This mass of mortality could stand between me and happiness—could make me a beggar, a wanderer, miserable, mad!"

He caught up the hand that hung nerveless from the couch.

"Accursed hand!" exclaimed he, "what torrents of blood have owed their flowing to thee! A word written by these fingers cost a thousand lives. And, O Heaven! in this cruel grasp was the key of thy dungeon, my Mary!—that dungeon of more than the body, the hideous prison-house that extinguished thy mind!"

He let fall the hand and wept bitterly.

To my utter surprise the procurator started upon his feet, and with the look that had so often made the heart quake, haughtily demanded who we were, and how we dared to interrupt his privacy? I felt as if a spirit had started up before me from the shroud. But this extraordinary revival was merely the last effort of a fierce mind. He tottered, and was falling, when my companion darted forward, grasped him by the bosom with one hand, and waving the falchion above him with the other—

"He hears! he sees!" exclaimed he exultingly. "Who are we? Who am I? Look upon me, Gessius Florus, before the sight leaves your eyes forever. See Sabat the Ishmaelite, the despised, the insulted, the trampled, the undone! But never did you prosper from the hour of my ruin. I was your spy, but it was only to bring you into a snare; I fed your pride, but it was only that it might turn the hearts of all men against you; I tempted your avarice, only that wealth might make your nights sleepless, and your days, days of fear; I roused your wrath into rage; I inflamed your ambition into frenzy! This night, I led your conquerors upon you. But I had made all sure. In another week, Gessius Florus, if you had escaped this sword, you would have been seized by order of the Emperor, stripped of your wealth,

your accursed power, and your wretched life. The command for your blood is this night crossing the Mediterranean!" The Change in Constantius

The dying man struggled to get free, wrenched himself by a violent effort from the strong grasp that at once held and sustained him, and fell. He was dead!

The son of El Hakim stood gazing on the body in silence, when the glitter of a ring on the hand, as it lay spread upon the floor, struck his eye. He seized it with an outcry; the man was wholly changed; his frowning visage flashed with joy. I in vain demanded the cause. He pressed the signet to his lips.

"Farewell, farewell," he exclaimed.

"Will you not wait for your share of the spoil, your ample and deserved reward?"

"Farewell!" he repeated, and burst from the chamber.

This memorable night made changes in more than the Ishmaelite. Constantius was at last in his element. I had hitherto seen him disguised by circumstances; the fugitive from his country, the lover under the embarrassments of forbidden passion, the ill-starred soldier. His native vigor of soul was under a perpetual cloud. But now the cloud broke away, and the consciousness of having nobly retrieved his check, and the still prouder consciousness of the career that this triumph laid open before him, brought the character of his mind into full light. He was now the lofty enthusiast that nature made him. He breathed generous ambition; his step was the step of command; and when he rushed to my embrace with almost the eagerness of a boy, and a voice stifled with emotion, I saw in him the romance, the soaring spirit, and the passionate love of glory that molded the Greek hero.

He had done his duty nobly. All were in admiration of the assault. The Romans had been fully prepared. He scaled the rampart, and scaled it in their teeth. His men followed gallantly. He pressed on; the second rampart was stormed. I had found him at the foot of the third, checked by its impregnable mass, but defying the whole garrison to drive him back. When I afterward saw the strength of those bulwarks, I felt that with such a leader at the head of troops

its animated by his spirit, there was nothing extravagant in the boldest hope of war.

This was an eventful night, and there was still much to be done before we slept. I threw over my tattered garments one of the many mantles that lay loose round the chamber, flung another on the body of the procurator, and sallied forth to give the final orders of the night. The prisoners had been already secured, and I found the great hall of the palace crowded with centurions. The interview was whimsical; for a while I escaped recognition; the gashed faces and torn raiment of my hunters, which bore the marks of our dreary march through the subterranean; the rough heads and hands stained with the fight, a startling contrast to the perfect equipment of the Roman under all circumstances, gave them the look of the robber tribes. My disguise was in the contrary way, yet complete. The cloak was accidentally one of the most showy in the procurator's wardrobe. I found myself enveloped in furs and tissues; and their Arab acquaintance was forgotten in what seemed to them the legitimate monarch of the mountains.

I was received by the circle of captives with the decent dignity of the brave. There was but one exception, which I might have guessed—the tribune. He was all humiliation, stooped to make some abject request about his baubles, and was probably on the point of apologizing for his ever having taken up the trade of war, when I turned on my heel and shook hands with my old friend the captain. He looked in evident perplexity. At last, through even the grim evidences of the night's work on my countenance, and the problem of my pompous mantle, his brightening eye began to recognize me, and he burst out with: "The Arab, by Jupiter!" But when I asked him what had become of his baggage, I touched a tender string, and, with a countenance as grave as if he had sustained an irreparable calamity, he told me that his whole traveling cellar was in the hands of my men, and it was his full belief that he was at that moment not worth a flask in the wide world!

The tribune turned away in conscious disgrace, and I sent

him to a dungeon to meditate till morn on the awkwardness of insolence to strangers. With the others, I sat down to such entertainment as a sacked fortress could supply, but which hunger, thirst, and fatigue rendered worth all the banquets of the idle. The old captain cheered his soul and grew rhetorical. The Armory of Herod

"Wine," said he, flask in hand, "does wonders. It is the true leveler, for it leaves no troublesome inequality of conditions. It is the true sponge that pays all debts at sight, for it makes us forget the existence of a creditor. It is the true friend that sticks by a man to the last drop; the faithful mistress that forsakes no man; and the most charming of wives, whose tongue no husband hears, whose company is equally delightful at all hours, and who is as bewitching to-day as she was fifty years ago."

The panegyric was popular. The governor's cellar flowed. The Italian connoisseurship in vintages was displayed in the most profound style, and long before we parted the great "sponge" which wipes away debt had wiped away every recollection of defeat. The idea of their being prisoners never clouded a sunbeam that came from the bottle. The letters scattered from the tribune's saddle were an unfailing topic. The legion had picked them up on the march; they had the piquancy of the scandal of particular friends; and the addition made to their intelligence by my wild associate was unanimously declared the most dexterous piece of frolic, the most pleasant venom, and the most venomous pleasantry, that ever emanated from the wit of man.

My task was not yet done. I left those gay soldiers to their wine, and with Constantius and some torch-bearers hastened to the Armory of Herod—the forbidden ground; the treasure-house of war; and, if old rumor were to be believed, the place of many a mysterious celebration unlawful to be seen by human eyes.

The building was in the center of the citadel," and was of the stateliest architecture. The massive doors were now thrown open. At the first step, I shrank from the blaze of steel and gold that shot back against the torches. The walls

The Secret Hall

of this gigantic hall were covered with arms and armor of every nation — cuirasses, Persian, Roman, and Greek; the plate mail of the Gaul; the Indian chain-armor; innumerable headpieces, from the steel cap of the Scythian to the plumed and triple-crested helmet of the Greek, that richest combination of strength and beauty ever borne by soldiership; shields of every shape and sculpture; the Greek orb, the Persian rhomb, the Cimmerian crescent; all arms — the ponderous spear of the phalanx; the Thracian pike; the German war-hatchet; the Italian javelin; the bow, from the Nubian, twice the height of man, to the small half-circle of the Assyrian cavalry; swords, the broad-bladed and fearful falchion of the Roman, every thrust of which let out a life; the huge two-handed sword of the Baltic tribes; the Syrian simitar; the Persian acinaces; the deep-hilted knife of the Indian islander; the Arab poniard; the serrated blade of the African—all were there in their richest models, the collection of Herod's life. War had raised him to a rank which allowed the indulgence of his most lavish tastes of good and ill; the sword was his true scepter, and never king bore the sign of his sovereignty more royally emblazoned.

After long admiration of this display of the wealth dearest to the soldier, I was retiring, when a slave approached, and prostrating himself, told me that a hall remained, still more singular, "the hall in which the great Herod received his death-warning."

I gazed round the armory; there was no door but the one by which we had entered——

"Not here," said the Ethiopian, "yet it is beside us. The foot of a Roman has never entered it. The secret remains with me alone. Does my lord command that it shall be revealed?"

The order was given. The slave took down one of the coats of mail, pushed back a valve, and we entered a winding stair which led us downward for some minutes. The narrow passage and heavy air reminded me of the subterranean. Our torches burned dimly, and the visages of my attendants showed how little their gallantry was to be relied on, if we were to be brought into contact with magic and ghosts.

"Here," said the Ethiopian, "it was the custom of the great king in his declining years, when his heart was broken by the loss of the most beloved of wives, and maddened by the conspiracies of the princes, his sons, to come and consult others than the God of Jerusalem. Here the Chaldee men of wisdom came to summon the spirits of the departed and show the fates of kingdoms. We are now in the bowels of the mountain." The Skeleton Warriors

He loosed a chain, which disappeared into the ground with a hollow noise. A huge mass of rock slowly rolled back, and showed a depth of darkness through which our twinkling torches scarcely made way.

"Stop," said the slave; "I should have first lighted the shrine."

He left us, and we shortly saw a blaze of many colors on a tripod in the center. As the blaze strengthened, a scene of wonder awoke before the eye. A host of armed statues grew upon the darkness. The immense vault was peopled with groups of warriors, all the great military leaders of the world in their native arms, and surrounded by a cluster of their captains; the disturbers of the earth, from Sesostris down to Cæsar and Antony, brandishing the lance or reining the charger, each in his known attitude of command. There rushed Cyrus in the scythed chariot, surrounded by his horsemen, barbed from head to foot. There was to be seen Alexander, with the banner of Macedon waving above his head, and armed as when he leaped into the Granicus; there Hannibal, upon the elephant that he rode at Cannæ; there Cæsar, with the head of Pompey at his feet. Those, and a long succession of the masters of victory, each in the moment of supreme fortune, made the vault a representative palace of human glory. But the view from the entrance told but half the tale. It was when I advanced and lifted the torch to the countenance of the first group that the moral was visible. All the visages were those of skeletons. The costly armor was hung upon bones. The spears and scepters were brandished by the thin fingers of the grave. The vault was the representative sepulcher of human vanity. This was one of

Herod's Death

the fantastic fits of a mind which felt too late the emptiness of earthly honors. Half pagan, the powerful intellect of the man gave way to the sullen superstitions of the murderer. Egypt was still the mystic tyrant of Palestine, and Herod, in his despair, sank into the slave of a credulity at once weak and terrible.

In the last hours of a long and deeply varied life, exhausted more by misery of soul than disease, when medicine was hopeless, and he had returned from trying the famous springs of Callirhoë in vain, the king ordered himself to be brought into this vault, and left alone. He remained in it during some hours. The attendants were at length roused by hideous wailings; they broke open the entrance, and found him in a paroxysm of terror. The vault was filled with the strong odors of some magical preparations, still burning on the tripod. The sound of departing feet was heard, but Herod sat alone. In accents of the wildest wo he declared that he had seen the statues filled with sudden life, and charging him with the death of his wife and children.

He left Masada instantly, pronouncing a curse upon the hour in which he first listened to the arts of Egypt. He was carried to Jericho, and there laid on a bed, from which he never rose. Alternate bursts of blasphemy and remorse made his parting moments frightful. But tyranny was in his last thought, and he died, holding in his hand an order for the massacre of every leading man in Judea.

CHAPTER XXXI

The Difficulties of a Leader

THE first decided blow of the war was given. I had incurred the full wrath of Rome; the trench between me and forgiveness was impassable, and I felt a stern delight in the conviction that hope of truce or pardon was at an end; the seizure of Masada was a defiance of the whole power of the empire. But it had the higher importance of a triumph at the beginning of a war, the moment when even the courageous are perplexed by doubt, and the timid watch their opportunity to raise the cry of ill fortune. It showed the facility of conquest, where men are determined to run the full risk of good or evil; it shook the military credit of the enemy, by the proof that they could be overmatched in activity, spirit, and conduct. The capture of a Roman fortress by assault was a thing almost unheard of. But the consummate value of the enterprise was, in its declaration to those who would fight, that they had leaders, able and willing to take the last chance with them for the freedom of their country. The First Decisive Blow

When day broke and the strength of this celebrated fortress was fairly visible, I could scarcely believe that our success was altogether the work of man. The genius of ancient fortification produced nothing more remarkable than Masada. It stood on the summit of a height so steep that the sun never reached the bottom of the surrounding defiles. Its outer wall was a mile round, with thirty-eight towers, each eighty feet high. Immense marble cisterns; granaries like palaces, capable of holding provisions for years; exhaustless arms and military engines, in buildings of the finest Greek art; defenses of the most costly skill at every commanding point of the interior—all showed the kingly magnificence and warlike care

The Duties of Command

of the most brilliant, daring, and successful monarch of Judea since Solomon.

By the first dawn a new wonder struck the population, whom the tumult of the night had gathered on the neighboring hills. I ordered the great standard of Naphtali to be hoisted on the citadel. It was raised amid shouts and hymns, and the huge scarlet folds spread out, majestically displaying the emblem of our tribe, the Silver Stag, before the morn. Shouts echoed and reechoed round the horizon. The hill-tops, covered as far as the eye could reach, did homage to the banner of Jewish deliverance, and inspired by the sight, every man of their thousands took sword and spear and made ready for war.

My first care was to relieve the anxieties of my family, and Constantius, with triumph in every feature, and love and honor glowing in his heart, was made the bearer of the glad tidings. The duties of command now devolved rapidly on me. An army to be raised, a plan of operations to be determined on, the chieftains of the country to be combined, and the profligate feuds of Jerusalem to be extinguished, were the difficulties that lay before my first step. It is in preliminaries like these that the burning spirit of a man, full of the manliest resolutions and caring no more for personal safety than he cares for the weed under his feet, is fated to feel the true troubles of enterprise.

I soon experienced the disgust of having to contend with the indolent, the artful, and the base. My mind, eager to follow up the first success, was entangled in tedious and intricate negotiation with men whom no sense of right or wrong could stimulate to integrity. Rival interests to be conciliated, gross corruption to be crushed, paltry passions to be stigmatized, family hatreds to be reconciled, childish antipathies, grasping avarice, giddy ambition, savage cruelty, to be rectified, propitiated, or punished, were among my tasks before I could plant a foot in the field. If those are the fruits that grow round even the righteous cause, what must be the rank crop of conspiracy?

But one point I speedily settled. The first assemblage of

the chieftains satisfied me as to the absurdity of councils of war. Every man had his plan, and every plan had some personal object in view. I saw that to discuss them would be useless and endless. I had already begun to learn the diplomatic art of taking my own way with the most unruffled aspect. I desired the proposers to reduce their views to writing, received their memorials with perfect civility, took them to my cabinet, and gave their brilliancy to add to the blaze of my fire. High station is soon compelled to dissemble. A month before I should have spoken out my mind and treated the plans and the proposers alike with scorn. But a month before I was neither general nor statesman. Freed now from the encumbrance of many councilors, I decided on a rapid march to Jerusalem [24]—there was power and glory in the word. By this measure I should be master of all that final victory could give, the popular mind, the national resources, and the highest prize of the most successful war.

The Vanity of Councils

Those thoughts banished rest from my pillow. I passed day and night in a perpetual, feverish exaltation of mind; yet if I were to compute my few periods of happiness, among them would be the week when I could neither eat, drink, nor sleep, from the mere overflowing of my warlike reveries at Masada. We may well forgive the splenetic apathy and sullen scorn of life that beset the holder of power, when time or chance leaves his grasp empty. The mighty monarch; the general, on whose sword hung the balance of empires; the statesman, on whose council rose or fell the welfare of millions, sunk into the unexciting employments of common life, their genius and their fame a burden and a reproach, the source of a restless and indignant contrast between what they were and what they are; how feeble an emblem of such minds is the lion fanged or the eagle chained! We may pass by even the frivolities which so often make the world stare at the latter years of famous men. When they can no longer soar to their natural height, all beneath is equal to them; our petty wisdom is not worth their trouble. They scorn the little opinions of commonplace mankind, and follow their own tastes, contemptuously trifle and proudly play the fool.

Salathiel Leads an Insurrection

Before the week was done, I was at the head of a hundred thousand men; I was the champion of a great country; the leader of the most formidable insurrection that ever contended with Rome in the east; the general of an army whose fidelity and spirit were not to be surpassed on earth. Could ambition ask more? Yet there was even more, tho too solemn to be asked by human ambition. My nation was sacred; a cause above human nature was to be defended; in that cause I might at once redeem my own name from obscurity, and be the instrument of exalting the name, authority, and religion of a people, the regal people of the Sovereign of all!

Constantius returned. It was in vain that I had directed my family to take refuge in the mountain country of Naphtali. My authority was for once disputed at home. Strong affection mastered fear, and swift as love could speed, I saw them enter the gates of Masada.

Such meetings can come but once in a life. I was surrounded by innocent fondness, beauty most admirable, and faith that no misfortunes could shake; and I was surrounded by them in an hour when prosperity seemed laboring to lavish on me all the wishes of man. I felt, too, by the glance with which Miriam looked upon her "hero," that I had earned a higher title to the world's respect. Had she found me in chains, she would have shared them without a murmur. But her lofty heart rejoiced to find her husband thus vindicating his claims to the homage of mankind.

Yet to those matchless enjoyments I gave up but one day. By the next dawn, the trumpet sounded for the march. I knew the importance of following up the first blow in all wars—its matchless importance in a war of insurrection. To meet the disciplined troops of Rome in pitched battles would be madness. The true maneuver was to distract their attention by variety of onset, cut off their communications, keep their camps in perpetual alarm, and make our activity, numbers, and knowledge of the country the substitutes for equipment, experience, and the science of the soldier.

In summoning those brave men, I renewed the regulations of the Mosaic law "—a law whose regard for natural feelings

distinguished it in the most striking manner from the stern violences of the pagan levy. No man was required to take up arms who had built a house and had not yet dedicated it; no man who had planted a vineyard or olive ground, and had not yet reaped the produce; no man who had betrothed a wife and had not yet taken her home; and no man during the first year of his marriage. An Omen

My prisoners were my last embarrassment. To leave them to the chance of popular mercy, or to leave them immured in the fortress, would be cruelty. To let them loose would be, of course, to give so many soldiers to the enemy. I adopted the simpler expedient of marching them to Berytus, seizing a squadron of the Roman provision ships, and embarking the whole for Italy. To my old friend the captain, whose cheerfulness could be abated only by a failure of the vintage, I offered a tranquil settlement among our hills. The etiquette of soldiership was formidably tasked by my offer, for the veteran was thoroughly weary of his thankless service. He hesitated, swore that I deserved to be a Roman, and even a captain of horse; but finished by saying that, bad a trade as the army was, he was too old to learn a better. I gave him and some others their unconditional liberty, and he parted from the Jewish rebel with more obvious regret than perhaps he ever dreamed himself capable of feeling for anything but his horse and his Falernian.

Eleazar took the charge of my family and the command of Masada. The sun burst out with cheerful omen on the troops, as I wound down the steep road, named the Serpent, from its extreme obliquity. The sight before me was of a nature to exhilarate the heaviest heart; an immense host making the air ring with acclamations at the coming of their chieftain. The mental perspective of public honors and national service was still more exalting. Yet I felt a boding depression, as if within those walls had begun and ended my prosperity!

On the first ridge which crossed our march I instinctively stopped to give a farewell look. The breeze had sunk, and the scarlet banner shook out its folds to the sun no more; a

The Marching of a Host

cloud hung on the mountain-peak and covered the fortress with gloom. I turned away. The omen was true.

But sickly thoughts were forgotten when we were once fairly on the march. Who that has ever marched with an army has not known its ready cure for heaviness of heart? The sound of the moving multitude, their broad mirth, the mere trampling of their feet, the picturesque lights that fall upon the columns as they pass over the inequalities of the ground, keep the eye and the mind singularly alive.

Our men felt the whole delight of the scene, and ran about like deer, or horses let loose into pasture. But to the military habits of Constantius this rude vigor was the highest vexation. He galloped from flank to flank with hopeless diligence, found that his arrangements only perplexed our bold peasantry the more, and at length fairly relinquished the idea of gaining any degree of credit by the brilliancy of their discipline. But I, no more a tactician than themselves, was content with seeing in them the material of the true soldier. The spear was carried awkwardly, but the hand that carried it was strong; the march was irregular, but the step was firm; if there were song, and mirth, and clamor, they were the cheerful voices of the brave; and I could read in the countenances of ranks which no skill could keep in order, the generous devotedness that, in wars like ours, have so often baffled the proud and left of the mighty but clay.

During the day we saw no enemy, and swept along with the unembarrassed step of men going up to one of our festivals. The march was hot; the zeal of our young soldiers made it rapid, and we continued it long after the usual hour of repose. But then sleep took its thorough revenge. It was fortunate for our fame that the enemy was not nigh, for sleep fastened irresistibly and at once upon the whole multitude. Sentinels were planted in vain; the spears fell from their hands, and the watchers were tranquilly laid side by side with the slumbering. Outposts and the usual precautionary arrangements were equally useless. Sleep was our master. Constantius exerted his vigilance with fruitless activity, and

before an hour passed, he and I were probably the sole sentinels of the grand army of Judea. Constantius Despairs

"What can be done with such sluggards?" said he indignantly, pointing to the heaps that, wrapped in their cloaks, covered the fields far round, and in the moonlight looked more like surges tipped with foam than human beings.

"What can be done? Wonders."

"Will they ever be able to maneuver in the face of the legions?"

"Never."

"Will they ever be able to move like regular troops?"

"Never."

"Will they ever be able to keep their eyes open after sunset?"

"Never, after such a march as we have given them to-day."

"What, then, under heaven, will they be good for?"

"To beat the Romans out of Palestine!"

CHAPTER XXXII

"Never Shalt Thou Enter Jerusalem"

The Appearance of the Enemy

BEFORE the sun was up my peasants were on the march again. From the annual journeys of the tribes to the great city, no country was ever known so well to its whole population, as Palestine. Every hill, forest, and mountain stream was now saluted with a shout of old recognition. Discipline was forgotten as we approached those spots of memory, and the troops rambled loosely over the ground on which in gentler times they had rested in the midst of their caravans. Constantius had many an irritation to encounter, but I combated his wrath, and pledged myself that when the occasion arrived, my countrymen would show the native vigor of the soil.

"Let my peasants take their way," said I. "If they will not make an army, let them make a mob; let them come into the field with the bold propensities of their nature unchecked by the trammels of regular warfare; let them feel themselves men and not machines, and I pledge myself for their victory."

"They will soon have the opportunity; look yonder."

He pointed to a low range of misty hills some miles onward.

"Are we to fight the clouds, for I can see nothing else?"

"Our troops, I think, would be exactly the proper antagonists. But there is one cloud upon those hills that something more than the wind must drive away."

The sun threw a passing gleam upon the heights, and it was returned by the sparkling of spears. The enemy were before us. Constantius galloped with some of our hunters to the front, to observe their position. The trumpets sounded, and my countrymen justified all that I had said by the enthusiasm that lighted up every countenance at the hope of coming in contact with the oppressor.

We advanced; shouts rang from tribe to tribe; we quick-

ened our pace; at length the whole multitude ran. At the foot of the height every man pushed forward without waiting for his fellow; it was complete confusion. The chief force against us was cavalry, and I saw them preparing to charge. We must suffer prodigiously, let the day end how it would. The whole campaign might hang on the first repulse. I stood in agony. I saw the squadrons level their lances. I saw the centurions dash out in front. All was ready for the fatal charge. To my astonishment, the whole of the cavalry wheeled round and disappeared.

A Skirmish Above

The panic was like miracle—equally rapid and unaccountable. I rode to the top of the hill and discovered the secret. Constantius, observing the enemy's attention taken up with my advance, had made his way round the heights. His trumpet gave the first notice of the maneuver. Their rear was threatened, and the cavalry fled, leaving a cohort in our hands.

Never was successful soldier honored with a more clamorous triumph than Constantius. Nature speaks out among her untutored sons. Envy has nothing to do in such fields as ours. He was applauded to the skies.

"Well," said I, as I pressed the gallant hand that had planted the first laurel on our brows, "you see that, if plowmen and shepherds make rude soldiers, they make capital judges of soldiership. You might have conquered a kingdom without receiving half this panegyric in Rome."

"The service is but begun, and we shall have another lesson to get or give to-morrow. Those fellows are grateful, I allow," said he, with a smile, "but you must confess that, for what has been done, we have to thank the discipline that brought us into the Roman rear."

"Yes, and the discipline that made them so much alarmed about their rear as to run away when they might have charged and beaten us."

This little affair put us all in spirits, and the songs and cheerful clamors burst out with renewed animation. But the appearance of the enemy soon became evident. We found the ruined cottage, the torn-up garden, the burned orchard—those habitual evidences of the camp. As we advanced, the

A Scene of Inspiration

tracks of wagons and of the huge wheels of the military engines were fresh in the grass, and from time to time some skeleton of a beast of burden, or some half-covered wreck of man, showed that desolation had walked there; the cavalry soon appeared on the heights in larger bodies; but all was forgotten in the sight that at length rose upon the horizon—we beheld, bathed in the richest glow of a summer's eve, the summits of the mountains round Jerusalem, and glorious above them, like another sun, the golden beauty of the Temple of temples!

What Jew ever saw that sight but with homage of heart? Fine fancies may declaim of the rapture of returning to one's country after long years. Rapture! to find ourselves in a land of strangers, ourselves forgotten, our early scenes so changed that we can scarcely retrace them, filled up with new faces, or with the old so worn by time and care that we read in them nothing but the emptiness of human hope; the whole world new, frivolous, and contemptuous of our feelings. Where is the mother, the sister, the woman of our heart? We find their only memorials among the dead, and bitterly feel that our true country is the tomb.

But the return to Zion was not of the things of this world. The Jew saw before him the city of prophecy and power. Mortal thoughts, individual sorrows, the melancholy experiences of human life, had no place among the mighty hopes that gathered over it, like angels' wings. Restoration, boundless empire, imperishable glory, were the writing upon its bulwarks. It stood before him, the Universal City, whose gates were to be open for the reverence of all time; the symbol to the earth of the returning presence of the Great King; the promise to the Jew of an empire, triumphant over the casualties of nations, the crimes of man, and even the all-grasping avarice of the grave.

The multitude prostrated themselves; then rising, broke forth into the glorious hymn sung by the tribes on their journeys to the Temple:

"Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, in the city of our God, the mountain of his holiness.

"Beautiful, the joy of the earth is Mount Zion, the city of the Great King! A Tribal Hymn

"God is known in her palaces for a refuge.

"We have thought of thy loving-kindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple.

"Walk about Zion, tell the towers thereof. Mark ye her bulwarks, consider her palaces. For her God is our God, forever and ever; he will be our guide in death; his praise is to the ends of the earth. Glory to the king of Zion."

The harmony of the adoring myriads rose sweet and solemn upon the air; the sky was a canopy of sapphire; the breeze rich with the evening flowers; Jerusalem before me! I felt as if the covering of my mortal nature was about to be cast away, and my spirit to go forth on a bright and boundless career of fortune.

But recollections, never to be subdued, saddened my memory of the Temple, and when the first influence of the homage passed, I turned from the sight of what was to me the eternal monument of the heaviest crime of man. I gave one parting glance as day died upon the spires. To my surprise, they were darkened by more than twilight; I glanced again, smoke rolled cloud on cloud over Mount Moriah; the distant roar of battle startled us. Had the enemy anticipated our march, and was Jerusalem about to be stormed before our eyes?

We were not left long to conjecture. Crowds of frightened women and children were seen flying across the country. The roar swelled again; we answered it by shouts and rushed onward. Unable to ascertain the point of attack, I halted the multitude at the entrance of one of the roads ascending to the great gate of the upper city, and galloped forward with a few of my people.

A horseman rushed from the gate with a heedless rapidity which must have flung him into the midst of our ranks or sent him over the precipice. His voice alone enabled me to recognize in this furious rider my kinsman Jubal. But never had a few months so altered a human being. Instead of the bold and martial figure of the chieftain, I saw an emaciated and exhausted man, apparently in the last stage of life or sor-

The Change in Jubal

row; the florid cheek was of the color of clay; the flashing eye was sunken; the loud and cheerful voice was sepulchral. I welcomed him with the natural regard of our relationship, but his perturbation was fearful; he trembled, grew fiery red, and could return my greeting only with a feeble tongue and a wild eye.

However, this was no time for private feelings. I inquired the state of things in Jerusalem. Here his embarrassment was thrown aside and the natural energy of the man found room.

"Jerusalem has three curses at this hour," said he fiercely, "the priests, the people, and the Romans, and the last is the lightest of the three;—the priests bloated with indulgence and mad with love of the world; the people pampered with faction and mad with bigotry; and the Romans availing themselves of the madness of each to crush all."

"But has the assault been actually made, or is there force enough within to repel it?" interrupted I.

"The assault has been made, and the enemy has driven everything before it, so far as has been its pleasure. Why it has not pushed on is inconceivable, for our regular troops are good for nothing. I have now been sent out to raise the villages, but my labor will be useless, for see—the eagles are already on the wall."

I looked; on the northern quarter of the battlements I saw, through smoke and flame, the accursed standard. Below rose immense bursts of conflagration; the whole of the new city, the Bezetha, was on fire. My plan was instantly formed. I divided my force into two bodies; gave one to Constantius, with orders to enter the city and drive the Romans from the walls; and with the other threaded the ravines toward a position on the hills. I had to make a long circuit. The Roman camp was pitched on the ridge of Mount Scopas, seven furlongs from the city. Guided by Jubal, I gained its rear. My troops, stimulated by the sight of the fugitive people, required all my efforts to keep them from rushing on the detachments, which we saw successively hurrying to reenforce the assault.

Night fell, but the signal for my attack, a fixed number of

torches on the tower of the Temple, did not appear. Our troops, ambushed in the olive-groves skirting the ridge, had hitherto escaped discovery. At length they grew furious and bore me along with them. As we burst up the rugged sides of the hill, like a huge surge before the tempest, I cast a despairing glance toward the city; the torches at that moment rose. Hope lived again. The sight added wings to our speed, and before the enemy could recover from its astonishment, we were in the center of the camp. Nothing could be more complete than our success. The legionaries, sure of the morning's march into Jerusalem and the plunder of the Temple, were caught leaning in crowds over the ramparts, unarmed, and making absolute holiday. Caius Cestius,[*] their insolent general, was carousing in his tent after the fatigues of the evening. The tribunes followed his example; the soldiery saw nothing to require their superior abstemiousness, and the wine was flowing freely in healths to the next day's rapine, when our roar opened their eyes. To resist was out of the question. Fifty thousand spearmen, as daring as ever lifted weapon, and inflamed with the feelings of their harassed country, were in their midst, and they fled in all directions. I pressed on to the general's tent, but the prize had escaped; he had fled at the first alarm. My followers indignantly set his quarters on fire; the blaze spread, and the flame of the Roman camp rolled up like the flame of a sacrifice to the god of battles.

Another Success

The seizure of this position was the ruin of the cohorts, abandoned between the hill and the city. At the sight of the flames the gates were flung open, and Constantius drove the assailants from point to point until our shouts told him that we were marching upon their rear. The shock then was final. The Romans, dispirited and surprised, broke like water, and scarcely a man of them lived to boast of having insulted the walls of Jerusalem.

Day arose and the Temple met the rising beam, unstained by the smoke of an enemy's fire. The wreck of the legions lay upon the declivities, like the fragments of a fleet on the shore. But this sight, painful even to an enemy, was soon

A Voice of Who

forgotten in the concourse of the rescued citizens, the exultation of the troops, and the still more seducing vanities that filled the heart of their chieftain.

Toward noon, a long train of the principal people, headed by the priests and elders, was seen issuing from the gates to congratulate me. Choral music and triumphant shouts announced their approach through the valley. My heart bounded with the feelings of a conqueror. The whole long vista of national honors, the popular praise, the personal dignity, the power of trampling upon the malignant, the clearance of my character, the right to take the future lead on all occasions of public service and princely renown, opened before my eye.

I was standing alone upon the brow of the promontory. As far as the eye could reach all was in motion, and all was directed to me; the homage of soldiery, priests, and people centered in my single being. I involuntarily uttered aloud:

"At last I shall enter Jerusalem in triumph."

I heard a voice at my side:

"Never shalt thou enter Jerusalem but in sorrow!"

An indescribable pang smote me. There was not a living soul near me to have uttered the words. The troops were standing at a distance below and in perfect silence. The words were spoken close to my ear. But I fatally knew the voice, and conjecture was at an end. My limbs felt powerless, as if I had been struck by lightning. I called Jubal up the peak to assist me. But the blow that smote my frame seemed to have smote his mind. His eyes rolled wildly; his speech was the language of a fierce disturbance of thought, altogether unintelligible. A lunatic stood before me.

Was this to be the foretaste of my own afflictions? Was I to see my kindred and friends put under the yoke of bodily and mental misery as a menace of the punishment that was to cut asunder my connection with human nature?

CHAPTER XXXIII

Jubal's Warning

Salathiel views Jerusalem

In pain and terror I drew my unfortunate kinsman from the gaze of the troops, and entreated him to tell me by what melancholy chance his feelings had been thus disturbed. He looked at me with a fierce glance, and half unsheathed his dagger. But I was not to be repelled, and still labored to soothe him. He hurriedly grasped the weapon, flung it down the steep, and sinking at my feet, burst into tears.

An uproar in the valley roused me from the contemplation of this wreck of youth and hope. The enemy, tho defeated, had suffered little comparative loss. The pride of the legions could not brook the idea of defeat by what they deemed the rabble of the city and the fields. Cestius, under cover of the broken country on our flanks, had rallied the fugitives of the camp, and now, between me and the city, were rapidly advancing in columns, forty thousand men.

The maneuver was bold. It might force us either to fight at a ruinous disadvantage, or to leave the city totally exposed. But, like all bold games, it was perilous, and I determined to make the Roman feel that he had an antagonist who would not leave the game at his discretion.

From the pinnacle on which I stood, the whole champaign lay beneath me. Nothing could be lovelier. The grandest combinations of art and nature were before the eye—Jerusalem on her hills, a city of palaces, and in that hour displaying her full pomp; her towers streaming with banners; her battlements crowded with troops; her priesthood and citizens in their festal habits pouring from the gates and covering the plain with the pageant; that plain itself colored with the richest produce of the earth; groves of the olive; declivities, purple with the vine or yellow with corn, gleaming in the sun, sheets of vegetable gold.

Salathiel Talks to Jubal

The signals of my advance parties along the heights soon told me that the enemy were in movement. My plan was speedily adopted. On the right spread the plain; on the left lay the broken and hilly country through which the enemy were advancing by its three principal ravines. I felt that, if they could unite, success with our undisciplined levies was desperate. The only hope was that of beating the columns separately as they emerged into the plain. Cavalry had now begun to ride down upon the processions, which, startled at the sight, were instantly scattered and flying toward Jerusalem.

"The day of congratulation is clearly over," said Jubal, pointing in scorn to the dispersed citizens. "To-day, at least, you will not receive the homage of those hypocrites of the Sanhedrin."

"Nor perhaps to-morrow, fellow soldier, for we must first see of what material those columns are made. If we beat them, we shall save the elders the trouble of crossing the plain, and receive their honors within the walls."

"In Jerusalem!" exclaimed he wildly; "no, never! You have dangers to encounter within those walls that no art of man could withstand; dangers keener than the dagger, more deadly than the aspic, more resistless than the force of armies! Enter Jerusalem and you are undone."

I looked upon him with astonishment. But there was in his eyes a sad humility; a strangely imploring glance, which formed the most singular contrast to the wildness of his words.

"Be warned!" said he, pressing close, as if he dreaded that his secret should be overheard; "I have seen and heard horrid things since I last entered the city. Beware of the leaders of Jerusalem! I tell you that they have fearful power, that their hate is inexorable, and that you are their great object!"

"This is altogether beyond my conception; how have I offended, and whom?" I asked.

He seemed to have recovered the tone of his mind. "You are charged with unutterable acts. Your abandonment of the priesthood; sights seen in your deserted chambers, which not even the most daring would venture to inhabit; your escape

from dangers that must have extinguished any other human being, have bred fatal rumors. It has been said that you worshiped in the bowels of the mountain of Masada, where the magic fire burns eternally before the image of the Evil One; nay, that you even conquered the fortress, impregnable as it was to man, by a horrid compact, and that the raising of your standard was the declared sign of that compact, dreadfully to be repaid by you and yours!"

"Monstrous and incredible calumny! Where was their evidence? My actions were before the face of the world!"

"If your virtues were written in a sunbeam, envy would darken and hatred destroy," exclaimed my kinsman, with the bold countenance and manly feeling of his better days. "They have in their secret councils stained you with a fate more gloomy than I can comprehend; they say that you are sentenced, even here, to the miseries of guilt beyond the grave."

I felt as if he had stricken a lance through my heart. Fiery sparkles shot before my eyes. I instinctively put my hand to my brow, to feel if the mark of Cain was not already there. I gave one hurried glance at heaven, as if to see the form of the destroying angel stooping over me. But the consciousness that I was in the presence of the multitude compelled me to master my feelings. I commanded Jubal to be ready with his proofs of those calumnies against the time when I should confound my accusers. But I now spoke to the winds. The interval of reason was gone. He burst out into the fiercest horrors.

"They pursue me!" exclaimed he; "they come by thousands, with the poniard and the poison! They cry for blood! They would drive me to a crime black as their own!"

He flung himself at my feet, and, clasping them, prevented every effort to save him from this degradation. He buried his face in my robe, and, casting up a scared look from time to time, as if he shrank from some object of terror, apostrophized his vision.

"Fearful being," he cried, "spare me! turn away those searching eyes! I have sworn to do the deed, and it shall be done. I have sworn it, against the ties of nature, against the

Salathiel Arms Jubal

laws of Heaven; but it shall be done. Now, begone! See!"—he cowered, pointing to a cloud that floated across the sun—"see! he spreads his wings; he hovers over me; the thunders are flaming in his hands. Begone, Spirit of Evil! It shall be done! Look, where he vanishes into the heights of his kingdom! the prince of the power of the air."

The cloud which fed the fancy of my unfortunate kinsman dissolved, and with it his fear of the tempter. But he lay exhausted at my feet, his eyes closed, his limbs shuddering—the emblem of weakness and despair. I tried to rouse him by that topic which would once have shot new life into his heroic heart.

"Rise, Jubal, and see the enemy. This battle must not be fought without you. To-day neither magic nor chance shall be imputed to the conqueror, if I shall conquer. Jerusalem sees the battle, and before the face of my country I will show myself the leader, or will leave the last drop of my blood upon those fields."

The warrior kindled within him. He sprang from the ground and shot down an eagle glance at the enemy, who had now made rapid progress, and were beginning to show the heads of their columns in the plain. He was unarmed. I gave him my sword, and the proud humility with which he put it to his lips was a pledge to me that it would be honored in his hands.

"Glorious thing!" he exclaimed, as he flashed it before the sun, "that raises man at once to the height of human honors, or sends him where no care can disturb his rest; the true scepter that graces empire; the true talisman, more powerful than all the arts of the enchanter! What, like thee, can lift up the lowly, enrich the destitute, and even restore the undone? What talent, knowledge, gift of nature, nay, what smile of fortune can, like thee, in one hour, bid the obscure stand forth the hero of a people or the wonder of a world? Now for glory!" he shouted to the listening circle of the troops, who answered him with shouts.

"Now for glory!" they cried, and poured after him down the side of the mountain.

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"Now for glory!" they cried.

See page 268.

The three gorges of the valleys through which the enemy moved, opened into the plain at wide intervals from one another. I saw that the eagerness of Cestius to reach the open ground was already hurrying his columns; and that, from the comparative facilities of the ravine immediately under my position, the nearest column must arrive unsupported. The moment came. The helmets and spears were already pouring from the pass, when a gesture from me let loose the whole human torrent upon them. Our advantage of the ground, our numbers, and still more, our brave impetuosity, decided the fate of this division at once. The legionaries were not merely repulsed, they were absolutely trampled down; there they lay, as if a mighty wall or a fragment of the mountain had fallen upon them. The Onslaught

The two remaining columns were still to be fought. The compact and broad mass of iron that rushed down the ravines seemed irresistible, and when I cast a glance on the irregular and waving lines behind me I felt the whole peril of the day. Yet I feared idly. The enemy charged and forced their way into the very center of the multitude like two vast wedges, crushing all before them. But, tho they could repel, they could not conquer. The spirit of the Jew fighting before Jerusalem was more than heroism. To extinguish a Roman, tho at the instant loss of life; to disable a single spear, tho by receiving it in his bosom; to encumber with his corpse the steps of the adversary, was reward enough for the man of Israel.

I saw crowds of those bold peasants fling themselves on the ground, creep in between the feet of the legionaries, and die stabbing them; others casting away the lance to seize the Roman bucklers and encumber them with the strong grasp of death; crowds mounting the rising grounds, to leap down upon the spears. The enemy, overborne with the weight of the multitude, at length found it impossible to move farther; yet their strength was not to be broken. Wherever we turned there was the same solid wall of shields, the same thick fence of leveled lances. We might as well have assaulted a rock. Our arrows rebounded from their impenetra-

Constantius Arrives

ble armor; the stones that poured on them from innumerable slings rolled off like the hail of a summer shower from a roof. But to have stopped the columns and prevented their junction was in itself a triumph. I felt that we had scarcely to do more than fix them where they stood, and leave the intense heat of the day, thirst, and weariness to fight our battle. But my troops were not to be restrained. They still rolled in furious heaps against the living fortification. Every broken lance in that impenetrable barrier, every pierced helmet, was a trophy; the fall of a single legionary roused a shout of exultation and was the signal for a new charge.

But the battle was no longer to be left to our unassisted efforts; the troops in Jerusalem moved down with Constantius at their head. In the perpetual roar of the conflict, their shouts had escaped my ear, and my first intelligence of their advance was from Jubal, who had well redeemed his pledge during the day. Hurrying with him to one of the eminences that overlooked the field, I saw with pride and delight the standard of Naphtali spreading its red folds at the head of the advancing multitude.

"Who commands them?" asked Jubal eagerly.

"Who should command them, with that banner at their head," replied I, "but my son, my brave Constantius?"

He heard no more, but, bending his turban to the saddle-bow, struck the spur into his horse, and with a cry of madness plunged into the center of the nearest column. The stroke came upon it like a thunderbolt; the phalanx wavered for the first time; an opening was made into its ranks. The chasm was filled up by a charge of my hunters. To save or die with Jubal was the impulse! That charge was never recovered; the column loosened, the multitude pressed in upon it, and Constantius arrived, only in time to see the remnant of the Roman army flying to the disastrous shelter of the hills.

The day was won—I was a conqueror! The invincible legions were invincible no more. I had conquered under the gaze of Jerusalem! Where was the enmity that would dare to murmur against me now? What calumny would not be crushed by the force of national gratitude? A flood of ab-

sorbing sensations filled my soul. No eloquence of man could express the glowing and superb consciousness that swelled my heart, in the moment when I saw the Romans shake, and heard the shouts of my army proclaiming me victor. After that day, I can forgive the boldest extravagance of the boldest passion for war. That passion may not be cruelty, nor the thirst of possession, nor the longing for supremacy; but something made up of them all, and yet superior to all—the essential spirit of the stirring motives of the human mind—ambition, kindled by the loftiest objects and ennobled by them—a game where the stake is an endless inheritance of renown, a sudden lifting of the man into the rank of those on whose names time can make no impression—immortals, without undergoing the penalty of the grave!

Salathiel t Conquero

CHAPTER XXXIV

The Pursuit of an Enemy

The Field of Battle

I DETERMINED to give the enemy no respite, and ordered the ravines to be attacked by fresh troops. While they were advancing, I galloped in search of Jubal over the ground of the last charge. He was not to be seen among the living or the dead.

The look of the field, when the first glow of battle had passed, was enough to shake a sterner spirit than mine. Our advance to the gorges of the mountain had left the plain naked. The sea of turbans and lances was gone, rolling, like the swell of an angry ocean, against the foot of the hills. All before us was the cliff or the rocky pass, thronged with helmets and spears. But all behind was death or misery worse than death; hundreds and thousands groaning in agony, crying out for water to cool their burning lips, or imploring the sword to put them out of pain. The legionaries lay in their ranks as they had fought; solid piles of men, horses, and arms, the true monuments of soldiership. The veterans of Rome had sustained the honors of her name.

I turned from this sight toward the rescued city. The sun was resting on its towers; the smoke of the evening sacrifice was ascending in slow wreaths from the altar of the sanctuary. The trumpets and voices of the minstrels poured a stream of harmony on the cool air. The recollection of gentler times came upon my heart. Through what scenes of anxious feeling had I not passed since those gates closed upon me. The contrast between the holy calm of my early days and the fierce struggles of my doomed existence pressed with bitter force. My spirit shook. The warrior enthusiasm was chilled.

The trampling of horses roused me from this unwarlike reverie. Constantius came up, glowing to communicate the in-

telligence that the last of the enemy had been driven in, and that his troops only awaited my orders to force the passes. I mounted, heard their shouts, and was again the soldier.

But the iron front of the enemy resisted our boldest attempts to force the ravines,—the hills were not to be turned, and we were compelled, after innumerable efforts, to wait for the movement of the Romans from a spot which thirst and hunger must soon make untenable. This day had stripped them of their baggage, their beasts of burden, and their military engines.

At dawn the pursuit began again. We still found the enemy struggling to escape out of those fatal defiles. The day was worn away in perpetual attempts to break the ranks of the legionaries. The Jew, light, agile, and with nothing to carry but his spear, was a tremendous antagonist to the Roman, perplexed among rocks and torrents, famishing, and encumbered with an oppressive weight of armor. The losses of this day were dreadful. Our darts commanded their march from the heights; every stone did execution among ranks whose armor was now scattered by the perpetual discharge. Still they toiled on, unbroken. We saw their long line laboring with patient discipline through the rugged depth below, and in the face of our attacks they made way till night again covered them.

I spent that night on horseback. Fatigue I never felt in the strong excitement of the time. I saw multitudes sink at my horse's feet, in sleep as insensible as the rock on which they lay. Sleep never touched my eyelids. I galloped from post to post, brought reinforcements to my wearied ranks, and longed for morn.

It came at last. The enemy had reached the head of the defile, but there a force was poured upon them that nothing could resist. Their remaining cavalry were driven into the torrent; the few light troops that scaled the higher grounds were swept down. I looked upon their whole army as in my hands, and was riding forward with Constantius and my chief officers to receive their surrender, when they were saved by one of those instances of devotedness that distinguished the Roman character.

The Flight of the Romans

Wearied of pursuit and evasion, I had rejoiced to see at last symptoms of a determination to wait for us and try the chance of battle. An abrupt ridge of rock, surmounted by a lofty cone, was the enemy's position, long after famous in Jewish annals. A line of spearmen was drawn up on the ridge, and the broken summit of the cone, a space of a few hundred yards, was occupied by a cohort. Italian dexterity was employed to give the idea that Cestius had taken his stand upon this central spot; an eagle and a concourse of officers were exhibited, and upon this spot I directed the principal attack to be made.

But the cool bravery of its defenders was not to be shaken. After a long waste of time in efforts to scale the rock, indignant at seeing victory retarded by such an obstacle, I left the business to the slingers and archers, and ordered a steady discharge to be kept up on the cohort. This was decisive. Every stone and arrow told upon the little force crowded together on the naked height. Shield and helmet sank one by one under the mere weight of missiles. Their circle rapidly diminished, and, refusing to surrender, they perished to a man.

When we took possession the army was gone. The resistance of the cohort had given the Romans time to escape, and Cestius sheltered his degraded laurels behind the ramparts of Bethhoron, by the sacrifice of four hundred heroes.

This battle, which commenced on the eighth day of the month Marchesvan, had no equal in the war. The loss to the Romans was unparalleled since the defeat of Crassus. Two legions were destroyed; six thousand bodies were left on the field. The whole preparation for the siege of Jerusalem fell into our hands. Then was the hour to have struck the final blow for freedom; then was given that chance of restoration which Providence gives to every nation and every man. But our crimes, our wild feuds, the bigoted fury and polluted license of our factions, rose up as a cloud between us and the light; we were made to be ruined.

Such were not my reflections when I saw the gates of Bethhoron closing on the fugitives; I vowed never to rest until I

brought prisoners to Jerusalem the last of the sacrilegious host that had dared to assault the Temple. Salathiel's Fall

The walls of Bethhoron, manned only with the wreck of the troops that we had routed from all their positions, could offer no impediment to hands and hearts like ours. I ordered an immediate assault. The resistance was desperate, for beyond this city there was no place of refuge nearer than Antipatris. We were twice repulsed, and I headed the third attack myself. The dead filled up the ditch, and I had already arrived at the foot of the rampart, with the scaling-ladder in my hand, when I heard Jubal's voice behind me. He was leaping and dancing in the attitudes of utter madness. But there was no time to be lost. I sprang upon the battlements, tore a standard from its bearer, and waved it over my head with a shout of victory. The plain, the hills, the valleys, covered with the host rushing to the assault, echoed the cry; I was at the summit of fortune!

In the next moment I felt a sudden shock. Darkness covered my eyes, and I plunged headlong.

I awoke in a dungeon.

CHAPTER XXXV

The Lapse of Years

In a Dungeon

In that dungeon I lay for two years![37] How I lived, or how I bore existence, I can now have no conception. I was not mad, nor altogether insensible to things about me, nor even without occasional inclination for the common objects of our being. I used to look for the glimmer of daylight that was suffered to enter my cell. The reflection of the moon in a pool, of which, by climbing to the loophole, I could gain a glimpse, was waited for with some feeble feeling of pleasure, but my animal appetites were more fully alive than ever. An hour's delay of the miserable provision that was thrown through my bars made me wretched. I devoured it like a wild beast, and then longed through the dreary hours for its coming again!

I made no attempt to escape. I dragged myself once to the entrance of the dungeon, found it secured by an iron door, and never tried it again. If every bar had been broken, I scarcely know whether I should have attempted to pass it. Even in my more reasoning hours, I felt no desire to move. Destiny was upon me. My doom was marked in characters which nothing but blindness could fail to read; and to struggle with fate, what was it but to prepare for new misfortune?

The memory of my wife and children sometimes broke through the icy apathy with which I labored to encrust my mind. Tears flowed; nature stung my heart; I groaned, and made the vault ring with the cries of the exile from earth and heaven. But this passed away, and I was again the self-divorced man, without a tie to bind him to transitory things. I heard the thunder and the winds; the lightnings sometimes startled me from my savage sleep. But what were they to me! I was dreadfully secure from the fiercest rage of nature.

There were nights when I conceived that I could distinguish the roarings of the ocean, and, shuddering, seemed to hear the cries of drowning men. But those, too, passed away. I swept remembrance from my mind, and felt a sort of vague enjoyment in the effort to defy the last power of evil. Cold, heat, hunger, waking, sleep, were the calendar of my year, the only points in which I was sensible of existence; I felt like some of those torpid animals which, buried in stones from the creation, live on until the creation shall be no more.

But this sullenness was only for the waking hour; night had its old, implacable dominion over me; full of vivid misery, crowded with the bitter-sweet of memory, I wandered free among those forms in which my spirit had found matchless loveliness. Then the cruel caprice of fancy would sting me; in the very concord of enchanting sounds there would come a funereal voice; in the circle of the happy, I was appalled by some hideous visage uttering words of mystery. A spectral form would hang upon my steps and tell me that I was undone.

From one of those miserable slumbers I was roused by a voice pronouncing my name. I at first confounded it with the wanderings of sleep. But a chilling touch upon my forehead completely aroused me. It was night, yet my eyes, accustomed to darkness, gradually discovered the first intruder who ever stood within my living grave; nothing human could look more like the dead. A breathing skeleton stood before me. The skin clung to his bones; misery was in every feature; the voice was scarcely above a whisper.

"Rise," said this wretched being, "prince of Naphtali, you are free; follow me."

Strange thoughts were in the words. Was this indeed the universal summoner—the being whom the prosperous dread, but the wretched love? Had the King of Terrors stood before me I could not have gazed on him with more wonder.

"Rise," said the voice impatiently; "we have but an hour till daybreak, and you must escape now or never."

The sound of freedom scattered my apathy. The world opened upon my heart; country, friends, children were in

Freedom Foiled

the world, and I started up with the feeling of one to whom life is given on the scaffold.

My guide hurried forward through the winding way to the door. He stopped; I heard him utter a groan, strike fiercely against the bars, and fall. I found him lying at the threshold without speech or motion; carried him back, and, by the help of the cruse of water left to moisten my solitary meal, restored him to his senses.

"The wind," said he, "must have closed the door, and we are destined to die together. So be it; with neither of us can the struggle be long. Farewell!"

He flung himself upon his face. A noise of some heavy instrument roused us both. He listened, and said: "There is hope still. The slave who let me in is forcing the door." We rushed to assist him, and tugged and tore at the massive stones in which the hinges were fixed, but found our utmost strength as ineffectual as an infant's. The slave now cried out that he must give up the attempt, that day was breaking and the guard was at hand. We implored him to try once more. By a violent effort he drove his crowbar through one of the panels; the gleam of light gave us courage, and with our united strength we heaved at the joints, which were evidently loosening. In the midst of our work the slave fled, and I heard a plunge into the pool beneath.

"He has perished," said my companion. "The door is on the face of a precipice. He has fallen, in the attempt to escape, and we are now finally undone."

The guard, disturbed by the noise, arrived, and in the depths of our cell we heard the day spent in making the impassable barrier firmer than ever.

For some hours my companion lay in that state of exhaustion which I could not distinguish from uneasy slumber, and which I attributed to the fatigue of our common labors. But his groans became so deep that I ventured to rouse him, and even to cheer him with the chances of escape.

"I have not slept," said he; "I shall never sleep again, until the grave gives me that slumber in which the wretched can alone find rest. Escape! No—for months, for years, I

have had but one object. I have traversed mountain and sea for it; I have given to it day and night, all that I possessed in the world; I could give no more but my life, and that too I was to give. I stood within sight of that object. But it is snatched from me, and now the sooner I perish the better." He writhed with mental pain.

Salathiel Recognizes Jubal

"But what cause can you have for being here? You have not fought our tyrants. Who are you?"

"One whom you can never know—a being born to honor and happiness, but who perverted them by pride and revenge, and whose last miserable hope is, that he may die unknown, and without the curses that fall on the traitor and the murderer. Prince of Naphtali, farewell!"

I knew the speaker in those words of wo. I cried out. "Jubal, my friend, my kinsman, my hero! Is it you, then, who have risked your life to save me?"

I threw myself beside him. He crept from me. I caught his meager hand; I adjured him to live and hope.

He started away wildly. "Touch me not; I am unfit to live. I—I have been your ruin, and yet He who knows the heart, knows that I alone am not to blame. I was a dupe to furious passions, the victim of evil counselors, the prey of disease of mind. On my crimes may Heaven have mercy! They are beyond the forgiveness of man."

By the feeble light, which showed scarcely more than the wretchedness of my dungeon, I made some little preparations for the refreshment of this feverish and famished being. His story agitated him, and strongly awakened as my curiosity was, I forbore all question. But it lay a burden on his mind, and I suffered him to make his confession.

"I loved Salome," said he; "but I was so secure of acceptance, according to the custom of our tribe, that I never conceived the possibility of an obstacle to our marriage. My love and my pride were equally hurt. The new distinctions of her husband made my envy bitterness. To change the scene, I went to Jerusalem. I there found malice active. Your learning and talents had made you obnoxious long before; your new fame and rank turned envy into hatred.

Jubal's Explanation

Onias, whose dagger you turned from the bosom of the noble Eleazar, remembered his disgrace. He headed the conspiracy against you, and nothing but the heroic vigor with which you stirred up the nation could have saved you long since from the last extremities of faction. My unhappy state of mind threw me into his hands. I was inflamed against you by perpetual calumnies. It was even proposed that I should accuse you before the Sanhedrin of dealing with the powers of darkness. Proofs were offered which my bewildered reason could scarcely resist. I was assailed with subtle argument; stimulated by sights and scenes of strange import, horrid and mysterious displays, which implicate the leaders of Jerusalem deeply in the crime of the idolaters. Spirits, or the semblances of spirits, were raised before my eyes; voices were heard in the depths and in the air, denouncing you, even you, as the enemy of Judea and of man; I was commanded, in the midst of thunders, real or feigned, to destroy you."

Here his voice sank, his frame quivered; and wrapping his head in his cloak, he remained long silent. To relieve him from his confession, I asked for intelligence of my family and of the country.

"Of your family I can tell you nothing," said he mournfully; "I shrank from the very mention of their name. During these two years I had but one pursuit—the discovery of your prison. I refused to hear, to think, of other things. I felt that I was dying, and I dreaded to appear before the great tribunal with the groans from your dungeon rising up to stifle my prayers."

"But is our country still torn by the Roman wolves?"

"The whole land is in tumult." Blood and horror are under every roof from Lebanon to Idumea. The Roman sword is out, and it falls with cruel havoc; but the Jewish dagger pays it home, and the legions quail before the naked valor of the peasantry. Yet what is valor or patriotism to us now? We are in our grave!"

The thought of my family exposed to the miseries of a ferocious war only kindled my eagerness to escape from this den of oblivion. It was evening, and the melancholy moon

threw the old feeble gleam on the water which had so long been to me the only mirror of her countenance. I suddenly observed the light darkened by a figure stealing along the edge of the pool. It approached, and the words were whispered: "It is impossible to break open the door from without while the guard is on the watch; but try whether it can not be opened from within." A crowbar was pushed into the loophole; its bearer, the slave, who had escaped by swimming, jumped down and was gone.

Another Chance of Escape

I left Jubal where he lay, lingered at the door till all external sounds ceased, and then made my desperate attempt. I was wasted by confinement, but the mind is force. I labored with furious effort at the mass of bolt and bar, and at length felt it begin to give way. I saw a star, the first for two long years, twinkling through the fracture. Another hour's labor unfixed the huge hinge, and I felt the night air, cool and fragrant, on my cheek. I now grasped the last bar, and was in the act of forcing it from the wall when the thought of Jubal struck me. There was a struggle of a moment in my mind. To linger now might be to give the guard time to intercept me. I was hungering for liberty. It was to me at that moment what water in the desert is to the dying caravan—the sole assuaging of a frantic thirst, of a fiery and consuming fever of the soul. If the grains of dust under my feet were diamonds, I would have given them to feel myself treading the dewy grass that lay waving on the hillside before me.

A tall shadow passed along. It was that of a mountain shepherd, spear in hand, guarding his flock from the wolves. He stopped at a short distance from the dungeon, and, gazing on the moon, broke out with a rude but sweet voice into song. The melody was wild, a lamentation over the fallen glories of Judea, "whose sun was set, and whose remaining light, sad and holy as the beauty of the moon, must soon decay." The word freedom mingled in the song, and every note of that solemn strain vibrated to my heart. The shepherd passed along.

I tore down the bar and gazed upon the glorious face of

The Ridicule of the Guard

heaven. My feet were upon the free ground! I returned hastily to the cell and told Jubal the glad tidings, but he heard me not. To abandon him there was to give him up to inevitable death, either by the swords of the guard or by the less merciful infliction of famine. I carried him on my shoulders to the entrance. A roar of ridicule broke on me at the threshold. The guard stood drawn up in front of the dilapidated door; and the sight of the prisoner entrapped in the very crisis of escape was the true food for ruffian mirth. Staggering under my burden, I yet burst forward, but was received in a circle of leveled spears. Resistance was now desperate; yet even when sunk upon the ground under my burden, I attempted to resist or gather their points in my bosom and perish. But my feeble efforts only raised new scoffing. I was unworthy of Roman steel, and the guard, after amusing themselves with my impotent rage, dragged me within the passage, placed Jubal, who neither spoke nor moved, beside me, blocked up the door, and wished me "better success the next time."

I spent the remainder of that night in fierce agitation. The apathy, the protecting scorn of external things, that I had nurtured, as other men would nurture happiness, was gone. The glimpse of the sky haunted me; a hundred times in the night I thought that I was treading on the grass; that I felt its refreshing moisture; that the air was breathing balm on my cheek; that the shepherd's song was still echoing in my ears, and that I saw him pointing to a new way of escape from my inextricable dungeon.

In one of those half-dreams I flung the crowbar from my hand. A sound followed, like the fall of stones into water. The sound continued. Still stranger echoes followed, which my bewildered fancy turned into all similitudes of earth and ocean—the march of troops, the distant roar of thunder, the dashing of billows, the clamor of battle, boisterous mirth, and the groaning and heaving of masts and rigging in storm. The dungeon was as dark as death, and I felt my way toward the sound. To my surprise, the accidental blow of the bar had loosened a part of the wall and made an orifice

large enough to admit the human body. The pale light of morning showed a cavern beyond, narrow and rugged. It branched into a variety of passages, some of them fit for nothing but the fox's burrow. I returned to the lair of my unhappy companion, and prevailed on him to follow only by the declaration that if he refused I must perish by his side. My scanty provisions were gathered up. I led the way, and, determined never to return to the place of my misery, we set forward to tempt in utter darkness the last chances of famine —pilgrims of the tomb.

The Labyrinth

We wandered through a fearful labyrinth for a period which utterly exhausted us. Of night and day we had no knowledge. I was sinking, when a low groan struck my ear. I listened pantingly; it came again. It was evidently from some object close beside me. I put forth my hand and pushed in the door of a large cavern; a flash of light illumined the passage. Another step would have plunged us into a pool a thousand feet below

CHAPTER XXXVI

Death in a Cavern

An Ocean Temple

THE cavern thus opened to us " seemed to be the magazine of some place of trade. It was crowded with chests and bales, heaped together in disorder. What dangerous owners we might meet cost us no question; life and liberty were before us. I cheered Jubal till his scattered senses returned, and he clasped my feet in humiliation and gratitude.

We were now like men created anew. We forced our way through piles that but an hour before would have been mountains to our despairing strength. The cavern opened into another, which seemed the dwelling of some master of extraordinary opulence. Silken tissues hung on the walls; the ceiling was a Tyrian canopy; precious vases stood on tables of citron and ivory. A large lyre, superbly ornamented, was suspended in an opening of the rock, and gave its melancholy music to the wind. But no human being was to be seen. Was this one of the true wonders that men classed among the fictions of Greece and Asia? The Nereids with their queen could not have sought a more secluded palace. Onward we heard the sounds of ocean. We followed them, and saw one of those scenes of grandeur which nature creates, as if to show the littleness of man.

An arch three times the height of the loftiest temple, and ribbed with marble, rose broadly over our heads. Innumerable shafts of the purest alabaster, rounded with the perfection of sculpture, rose in groups and clusters to the solemn roof; wildflowers and climbing plants of every scent and hue gathered round the capitals, and hung the gigantic sides of the hall with a lovelier decoration than ever was wrought in loom. The awful beauty of this ocean temple bowed the heart in instinctive homage. I felt the sacredness of nature.

On the Edge of the Cavern

But this grandeur was alone worthy of the spectacle to which it opened. The whole magnificence of the Mediterranean spread before our eyes, smooth as polished silver and now reflecting the glories of the west. The sun lay on the horizon in the midst of crimson clouds, like a monarch on the funeral pile, sinking in the splendors of a conflagration that lighted earth and ocean.

But at this noble portal we had reached our limit. The sides of the cavern projected so far into the waters as to make a small anchorage. Access or escape by land was palpably impossible. Yet, here at least, we were masters. No claimant presented himself to dispute our title. The provisions of our unknown host were ample, and, to our eager tastes, were dangerous from their luxury. The evening that we passed at the mouth of the cave, exhilarated with the first sensation of liberty, and enjoying every aspect and voice of the lovely scene with the keenness of the most unhoped-for novelty, was a full recompense for the toils and terrors of the labyrinth.

The sun went down. The surge that died at our feet murmured peace; the wheeling sea-birds, as their long trains steered homeward, pouring out from time to time a clangor of wild sounds that descended to us in harmony; the little white-sailed vessels, that skimmed along the distant waters like summer flies; the breeze waving the ivy and arbutus, that festooned our banquet-hall, alike spoke to the heart the language of peace.

"If," said I, "my death-bed were to be left to my own choice, on the edge of this cavern would I wish to take my last farewell."

"To the dying all places must be indifferent," replied my companion; "when Death is at hand, his shadow fills the mind. What matters it to the exile, who in a few moments must leave his country forever, on what spot of its shore his last step is planted? Perhaps the lovelier that spot the more painful the parting. If I must have my choice, let me die in the dungeon or in battle: in the chain that makes me hate the earth, or in the struggle that makes it forgotten."

Jubal's Remorse

"Yet," said I, "even for battle, if we would acquit ourselves as becomes men, is not some previous rest almost essential? and for the sterner conflict with that mighty enemy before whom our strength is vapor, is it not well to prepare the whole means of mental fortitude? I would not perish in the irritation of the dungeon, in the blind fury of man against man, nor in the hot and giddy whirl of human cares. Let me lay my sinking frame where nothing shall intrude upon the nobler business of the mind. But these are melancholy thoughts. Come, Jubal, fill to the speedy deliverance of our country."

"Here, then, to her speedy deliverance, and the glory of those who fight her battles!" The cup was filled to the brim, but just as the wine touched his lips he flung it away. "No," exclaimed he, in bitterness of soul, "it is not for such as I to join in the aspirations of the patriot and the soldier. Prince of Naphtali, your generous nature has forgiven me, but there is an accuser here"—and he struck his withered hand wildly upon his bosom—"that can never be silenced. Under the delusions, the infernal delusions of your enemies, I followed you through a long period of your career, unseen. Every act, almost every thought, was made known to me, for you were surrounded by the agents of your enemies. I was driven on by the belief that you were utterly accursed by our law, and that to drive the dagger to your heart was to redeem our cause. But the act was against my nature, and in the struggle my reason failed. When I stood before you on the morning of the great battle, you saw me in one of those fits of frenzy that always followed a new command to murder. The misery of seeing Salome's husband once more triumphant finally plunged me into the Roman ranks to seek for death. I escaped, followed the army, and reached Bethhoron in the midst of the assault. Still frantic, I thought that in you I saw my rival victorious. It was this hand, this parricidal hand, that struck the blow." He covered his face and wept convulsively.

The mystery of my captivity was now cleared up, and feeling only pity for the ruin that remorse had made, I succeeded

at last in restoring him to some degree of calmness. I even ventured to cheer him with the hope of better days, when in the palace of his fathers I should acknowledge my deliverer.

With a pressure of the hand and a melancholy smile, "I know," said he, "that I have not long to live. But if a prayer of mine is to be answered by that greatest of all Powers whom I have so deeply offended, it would be, to die in some act of service for my prince and my pardoner! But hark!"

A groan was uttered close to the spot where we sat. I perceived for the first time an opening behind some furniture; entered, and saw lying on a bed a man apparently in the last stage of exhaustion.

He exclaimed: "Three days of misery—three days left alone, to die—without food, without help, abandoned by all. But I have deserved it. Traitor and villain as I am, I have deserved a thousand deaths!"

I looked upon this outcry as but the raving of pain, and brought him some wine. He swallowed it with avidity, but even while I held the cup to his lips, he sank back with a cry of horror.

"Aye," cried he, "I knew that I could not escape you; you have come at last. Spirit, leave me to die! Or if," said he, half rising and looking in my face with a steady yet dim glare, "you can tell the secrets of the grave, tell me what is my fate. I adjure you, fearful being, by the God of Israel; by the gods of the pagan, or if you acknowledge any god beyond the dreams of miserable man, tell me what I am to be?"

I continued silent, struck with the agony of his features. Jubal entered, and the looks of the dying man were turned on him.

"More of them!" he exclaimed, "more tormentors! more terrible witnesses of the tortures of a wretch whom earth casts out! What I demand of you is the fate of those who live as I have lived—the betrayer, the plunderer, the man of blood? But you will give me no answer. The time of your power is not come."

He lay for a short period in mental sufferings; then, start-

Conscience-Stricken

ing upon his feet by an extraordinary effort of nature, and with furious execrations at the tardiness of death, he tore off the bandage which covered a wound on his forehead. The blood streamed down and made him a ghastly spectacle.

"Aye," cried he, as he looked upon his stained hands, "this is the true color; the traitor's blood should cover the traitor's hands. Years of crime, this is your reward. The betrayal of my noble master to death, the ruin of his house, the destruction of his name; these were the right beginnings to the life of the robber."

A peal of thunder rolled over our heads and the gush of the rising waves roared through the cavern.

"Aye, there is your army," he cried, "coming in the storm. I have seen your angry visages at night in the burning village; I have seen you in the shipwreck; I have seen you in the howling wilderness; but now I see you in shapes more terrible than all."

The wind bursting through the long vaults forced open the door.

"Welcome, welcome to your prey!" he yelled, and drawing a knife from his sash, darted it into his bosom. The act was so instantaneous that to arrest the blow was impossible. He fell and died with a brief, fierce struggle.

"Horrible end," murmured Jubal, gazing on the silent form; "happier for that wretch to have perished in the hottest strife of man or nature, trampled in the charge or plunged into the billows! Save me from the misery of lonely death!"

"Yet," said I, "it was our presence that made him feel. He was guilty of some crime, perhaps of many, that the sight of us awoke to torment his dying hour. I saw that he gazed upon me with evident alarm, and not improbably my withered face, and those rags of my dungeon, startled him into recollections too strong for his decaying reason."

"Have you ever seen him before?"

"Never."

I gave a reluctant look at the hideous distortion of a countenance still full of the final agony. I turned away in awe.

"Now, Jubal, to think of ourselves. Soon we shall have fairly tried our experiment. A few days must exhaust our provisions. The surges roll on the one hand; on the other we have the rock." The Art of Pira

"But we shall die at least in pomp," said Jubal. "No king of Asia will lie in a nobler vault, nor even have sincerer rejoicings at his end; the crows and vultures are no hypocrites."

The dead man's turban had fallen off in his last violence, and I perceived the corner of a letter in its folds. I read it; its intelligence startled me. It was from the commandant of the Roman fleet on the coast mentioning that a squadron was in readiness to "attack the pirates in their cavern."

A heavy sound, as if something of immense weight had rushed into the entrance of the arch, followed by many voices, stopped our conversation.

"The Romans have come," said I, "and now you will be indulged with your wish—our lives are forfeited—for never will I go back to the dungeon."

"I hear no sound but that of laughter," said Jubal, listening; "those invaders are the merriest of cutthroats. But before we give ourselves actually into their hands, let us see of what they are made."

We left the chamber and returned to the recess from which we had originally emerged. It commanded a view of the chief avenues of the cavern; and while I secured the door, Jubal mounted the wall, and reconnoitered the enemy through a fissure.

"These are no Romans," whispered he, "but a set of the most jovial fellows that ever robbed on the seas. They have clearly been driven in by the storm, and are now preparing to feast. Their voyage has been lucky, if I am to judge by the bales that they are hauling in; and if wine can do it, they will be in an hour or two drunk to the last man."

"Then we can take advantage of their sleep, let loose one of their boats, and away," said I.

I mounted to see this pirate festivity. In the various vistas of the huge cavern groups of bold-faced and athletic men

Plunderers were gathering, all busy with the work of the time; some piling fires against the walls and preparing provisions; some stripping off their wet garments and bringing others out of heaps of every kind and color, in the recesses of the rock; some wiping the spray from rusty helmets and corselets. The vaults rang with songs, boisterous laughter, the rattling of armor, and the creaking and rolling of chests of plunder. The dashing of the sea under the gale filled up this animated dissonance; and at intervals the thunder, bursting directly above our heads, mingled with all and overpowered all.

CHAPTER XXXVII

A Pirate Band

A Pirate

THE chamber whose costly equipment first told us of the opulence of its masters was set apart for the chief rovers, who were soon seated at a large table in its center, covered with luxury. Flagons of wine were brought from cellars known only to the initiated; fruits piled in silver baskets blushed along the board; plate of the richest workmanship, the plunder of palaces, glittered in every form; tripods loaded with aromatic wood threw a blaze up to the roof; and from the central arch hung a superb Greek lamp, shooting out light from a hundred mouths of serpents twined in all possible ways. The party before me were about thirty[40] as fierce-looking figures as ever toiled through tempest; some splendidly attired, some in the rough costume of the deck; but all jovial, and evidently determined to make the most of their time. Other men had paid for the banquet, and there was probably not a vase on their table that was not the purchase of personal hazard. They sat, conquerors, in the midst of their own trophies; and not the most self-indulgent son of opulence could have luxuriated more in his wealth, nor the most exquisite student of epicurism have discussed his luxuries with more finished and fastidious science. Lounging on couches covered with embroidered draperies, too costly for all but princes, they lectured the cooks without mercy: the venison, pheasants, sturgeon, and a multitude of other dishes were in succession pronounced utterly unfit to be touched, and the wine was tasted, and often dismissed, with the caprice of palates refined to the highest point of delicacy. Yet the sea air was not to be trifled with, and a succession of courses appeared, and were despatched with a diligence that prohibited all language beyond the pithy phrases of delight or disappointment.

Wine-Tasters

The wine at length set the conversation flowing, and from the merits of the various vintages the speakers diverged into the general subjects of politics and their profession; on the former of which they visited all parties with tolerably equal ridicule; and on the latter, declared unanimously that the only cause worthy of a man of sense was the cause for which they were assembled round that table. The next stage was the more hazardous one of personal jocularity; yet even this was got over with but a few murmurs from the parties suffering. Songs and toasts to themselves, their loves, and their enterprises in all time to come relieved the drier topics; and all was good fellowship until one unlucky goblet of spoiled wine soured the banquet.

"So, this you call Chian," exclaimed a broad-built figure, whose yellow hair and blue eyes showed him to be a son of the North; "may I be poisoned," and he made a hideous grimace, "if more detestable vinegar ever was brewed; let me but meet the merchant, and I shall teach him a lesson that he will remember when next he thinks of murdering men at their meals. Here, baboon, take it; it is fit only for such as you."

He flung the goblet point-blank at the head of a negro, who escaped it only by bounding to one side with the agility of the ape that he much resembled.

"Bad news, Vladomir, for our winter's stock, for half of it is Chian," said a dark-featured and brilliant-eyed Arab, who sat at the head of the table. "Ho! Syphax, fill round from that flagon, and let us hold a council of war upon the delinquent wine."

The slave dexterously changed the wine; it was poured round, pronounced first-rate, and the German was laughed at remorselessly.

"I suppose I am not to believe my own senses," remonstrated Vladomir.

"Oh! by all means, as long as you keep them," said one, laughing.

"Will you tell me that I don't know the difference between wine and that poison?"

"Neither you nor any man, friend Vladomir, can know much

upon the subject after his second dozen of goblets," sneered another at the German's national propensity.

"You do him injustice," said a subtle-visaged Chiote at the opposite side of the table. "He is as much in his senses this moment as ever he was. There are brains of that happy constitution which defy alike reason and wine."

"Well, I shall say no more," murmured the German sullenly, "than confound the spot on which that wine grew, wherever it lies; the hungriest vineyard on the Rhine would be ashamed to show its equal. By Woden, the very taste will go with me to my grave."

"Perhaps it may," said the Chiote, irritated for the honor of his country, and significantly touching his dagger. "But were you ever in the island?"

"No; nor ever shall, with my own consent, if that flagon be from it," growled the German, with his broad eye glaring on his adversary. "I have seen enough of its produce, alive and dead to-night."

The wind roared without, and a tremendous thunder-peal checked the angry dialog. There was a general pause.

"Come, comrades, no quarreling," cried the Arab. "Heavens, how the storm comes on! Nothing can ride out to-night. Here's the captain's health, and safe home to him."

The cups were filled; but the disputants were not to be so easily reconciled.

"Ho! Memnon," cried the master of the table to a sallow Egyptian richly clothed, whose simitar and dagger sparkled with jewels. He was engaged in close council with the rover at his side. "Lay by business now; you don't like the wine or the toast?"

The Egyptian, startled from his conference, professed his perfect admiration of both, and sipping, returned to his whisper.

"Memnon will not drink for fear of letting out his secrets; for instance, where he found that simitar, or what has become of the owner," said a young and handsome Idumean with a smile.

The Egyptian Questioned

"I should like to know by what authority you ask me questions on the subject. If it had been in your hands, I should have never thought any necessary," retorted the scowling Egyptian.

"Aye, of course not, Memnon; my way is well known. Fight rather than steal; plunder rather than cheat; and, after the affair is over, account to captain and crew, rather than glitter in their property," was the Idumean's answer, with a glow of indignation reddening his striking features.

"By the by," said the Arab, in whose eye the gems flashed temptingly, "I think Memnon is always under a lucky star. We come home in rags, but he regularly returns the better for his trip; Ptolemy himself has not a more exquisite tailor. All depends, however, upon a man's knowledge of navigation in this world."

"And friend Memnon knows every point of it but plain sailing," said the contemptuous Idumean.

The Egyptian's sallow skin grew livid. "I may be coward, or liar, or pilferer," exclaimed he; "but if I were the whole three, I could stand no chance of being distinguished in the present company."

"Insult to the whole profession," laughingly exclaimed the Arab. "And now I insist, in the general name, on your giving a plain account of the proceeds of your last cruise. You can be at no loss for it."

"No; for he has it by his side, and in the most brilliant arithmetic," said Hanno, a satirical-visaged son of Carthage.

"I must hear no more on the subject," bitterly pronounced the Egyptian. "Those diamonds belong to neither captain nor crew. I purchased them fairly, and the seller was, I will undertake to say, the better off of the two."

"Yes; I will undertake to say," laughed the Idumean, "that you left him the happiest dog in existence. It is care that makes man miserable, and the less we have to care for the happier we are. I have not a doubt you left the fellow at the summit of earthly rapture!"

"Aye!" added the Arab, "without a sorrow or a shekel in the world."

Boisterous mirth followed the Egyptian, as he started from his couch and left the hall, casting fierce looks in his retreat, like Parthian arrows, on the carousal. The German had, in the mean time, fallen back in a doze, from which he was disturbed by the slave's refilling his goblet.

"Aye, that tastes like wine," said he, glancing at the Greek, who had by no means forgotten the controversy.

"Taste what it may, it is the very same wine that you railed at half an hour ago," returned the Chiote; "the truth is, my good Vladomir, that the wine of Greece is like its language; both are exquisite and unrivaled to those who understand them. But Nature wisely adapts tastes to men, and men to tastes. I am not at all surprised that north of the Danube they prefer beer."

The German had nothing to give back for the taunt but the frown that gathered on his black brow.

The Chiote pursued his triumph, and with a languid, lover-like gaze on the wine, which sparkled in purple radiance to the brim of its enameled cup, he apostrophized the produce of his fine country.

"Delicious grape!—essence of the sunshine and of the dew! —what vales but the vales of Chios could have produced thee? What tint of heaven is brighter than thy hue? What fragrance of earth richer than thy perfume?"

He lightly sipped a few drops from the edge, like a libation to the deity of taste.

"Exquisite draft!" breathed he; "unequaled but by the rosy lip and melting sigh of beauty! Well spoke the proverb: 'Chios, whose wines steal every head, and whose women, every heart.'"

"You forget the rest," gladly interrupted the German—"and whose men steal everything."

A general laugh followed the retort, such as it was.

"Scythian!" said the Greek across the table, in a voice made low by rage, and preparing to strike.

"Liar!" roared the German, sweeping a blow of his falchion, which the Chiote escaped only by flinging himself on the ground. The blow fell on the table, where it caused wide

The Captain

devastation. All now started up; swords were out on every side, and nothing but forcing the antagonists to their cells prevented the last perils of a difference of palate. The storm bellowed deeper and deeper.

"Here's to the luck that sent us back before this northwester thought of stirring abroad," said the Arab. "I wish our noble captain were among us now. Where was he last seen?"

"Steering westward, off and on Rhodes, looking out for the galley that carried the procurator's plate. But this wind must send him in before morning," was the answer of Hanno.

"Or send him to the bottom, where many as bold a fellow has gone before him," whispered a tall, haggard-looking Italian to the answerer.

"That would be good news for one of us at least," said Hanno. "You would have no reckoning to settle. Your crew made a handsome affair of the Alexandrian prize, and the captain might be looking for returns, friend Tertullus."

"Then let him look to himself. His time may be nearer than he thinks. His haughtiness to men as good as himself may provoke justice before long," growled the Italian, in memory of some late discipline.

Hanno laughed loudly.

"Justice!—is the man mad? The very sound is high treason in our gallant company. Why, comrade, if justice ever ventured here, where would some of us have been these last six months?"

The sound caught the general ear; the allusion was understood, and the Italian was displeased

"I hate to be remarkable," said he; "with the honest it may be proper to be honest; but beside you, my facetious Hanno, a man should cultivate a little of the opposite school in mere compliment to his friend. You had no scruples when you hanged the merchant the other day."

A murmur arose in the hall.

"Comrades," said Hanno, with the air of an orator, "hear me too on that subject: three words will settle the question to men of sense. The merchant was a regular trader. Will

any man who knows the world, and has brains an atom clearer than those with which fate has gifted my virtuous friend, believe that I, a regular liver by the merchant, would extinguish that by which I live? Sensible physicians never kill a patient while he can pay; sensible kings never exterminate a province when it can produce anything in the shape of a tax; sensible women never pray for the extinction of our sex until they despair of getting husbands; sensible husbands never wish their wives out of the world while they can get anything by their living: so, sensible men of our profession will never put a merchant under water until they can make nothing by his remaining above it. I have, for instance, raised contributions on that same trader every summer these five years; and, by the blessing of fortune, hope to have the same thing to say for five times as many years to come. No, I would not see any man touch a hair of his head. In six months he will have a cargo again, and I shall meet him with as much pleasure as ever."

The Philosoph Robber

The Carthaginian was highly applauded.

"Malek, you don't drink," cried the Arab to a gigantic Ethiopian toward the end of the table. "Here, I pledge you in the very wine that was marked for the Emperor's cellar."

Malek tasted it, and sent back a cup in return.

"The Emperor's wine may be good enough for him," was the message; "but I prefer the wine yonder, marked for the Emperor's butler."

The verdict was fully in favor of the Ethiopian.

"In all matters of this kind," said Malek, with an air of supreme taste, "I look first to the stores of the regular professors—the science of life is in the masters of the kitchen and the cellar. Your emperors and procurators, of course, must be content with what they can get. But the man who wishes to have the first-rate wine should be on good terms with the butler. I caught this sample on my last voyage after the imperial fleet. Nero never had such wine on his table."

He indulged himself in a long draft of this exclusive luxury, and sank on his couch, with his hand clasping the superbly embossed flagon—a part of his prize.

The Ethiopian's Taint

"The black churl," said a little shriveled Syrian, "never shares; he keeps his wine as he keeps his money."

"Aye, he keeps everything but his character," whispered Hanno.

"There you wrong him," observed the Syrian; "no man keeps his character more steadily. By Beelzebub! it is like his skin; neither will be blacker the longest day he has to live."

A roar of laughter rose round the hall.

"Black or not black," exclaimed the Ethiopian, with a sullen grin, that showed his teeth like the fangs of a wild beast, "my blood's as red as yours."

"Possibly," retorted the little Syrian; "but as I must take your word on the subject till I shall have seen a drop of it spilt in fair fight, I only hope I may live and be happy till then; and I can not put up a better prayer for a merry old age."

"There is no chance of your ever seeing it," growled the Ethiopian; "you love the baggage and the hold too well to leave them to accident, be the fight fair or foul."

The laugh was easily raised, and it was turned against the Syrian, who started up and declaimed with a fury of gesture that made the ridicule still louder.

"I appeal to all," cried the fiery orator; "I appeal to every man of honor among us, whether by night or day, on land or water, I have ever been backward."

"Never at an escape," interrupted the Ethiopian.

"Whether I have ever broken faith with the band?"

"Likely enough; where nobody trusts, we may defy treason."

"Whether my character and services are not known and valued by our captain?" still louder exclaimed the irritated Syrian.

"Aye, just as little as they deserve."

"Silence, brute!" screamed the diminutive adversary, casting his keen eyes, that doubly blazed with rage, on the Ethiopian, who still lay embracing the flagon at his ease. "With heroes of your complexion I disdain all contest. If I must

fight, it shall be with human beings; not with savages—not with monsters."

The Appearance Salathiel

The Ethiopian's black cheek absolutely grew red; this taunt was the sting. At one prodigious bound he sprang across the table, and darted upon the Syrian's throat with the roar and the fury of a tiger. All was instant confusion; lamps, flagons, fruits, were trampled on; the table was overthrown; swords and poniards flashed in all hands. The little Syrian yelled, strangling in the grasp of the black giant, and it was with the utmost difficulty that he could be rescued. The Arab, a fine athletic fellow, achieved this object, and bade him run for his life—a command with which he complied unhesitatingly, followed by a cheer from Hanno, who swore that if all trades failed, he would make his fortune by his heels at the Olympic games.

Our share in the scene was come. The fugitive, naturally bold enough, but startled by the savage ferocity of his antagonist, made his way toward our place of refuge. The black got loose and pursued. I disdained to be dragged forth as a lurking culprit, and flinging open the door stood before the crowd. The effect was marvelous. The tumult was hushed at once. Our haggard forms, seen by that half-intoxication which bewilders the brain before it enfeebles the senses, were completely fitted to startle the superstition that lurks in the bosom of every son of the sea; and for the moment they evidently took us for something better, or worse, than man.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

Salathiel and the Pirate Captain

Spies

But the delusion was short-lived; my voice broke the spell, and perhaps the consciousness of their idle alarm increased their rage. "Spies!" was then the outcry, and this dreaded sound brought from beds and tables the whole band. It was in vain that I attempted to speak; the mob have no ears, whether in cities or caves, and we were dragged forward to undergo our examination. Yet what was to be done in the midst of a host of tongues, all questioning, accusing, and swearing together?

Some were ready to take every star of heaven to witness that we were a pair of Paphlagonian pilots, and the identical ones hired to run two of their ships aground, by which the best expedition of the year was undone. Others knew us to have been in the regular pay of the procurator, and the means of betraying their last captain to the ax. But the majority honored us with the character of simple thieves, who had taken advantage of their absence to plunder the baggage.

The question next arose, "How we could have got in?" and for the first time the carousers thought of their sentinel. I told them what I had seen. They poured into his chamber, and their suspicions were fixed in inexorable reality: "We had murdered him." The speediest death for us was now the only consideration. Every man had his proposal, and never were more curious varieties of escape from this evil world offered to two wretches already weary of it; but the Arab's voice carried the point. "He disliked seeing men tossed into the fire; ropes were too useful, and the sword was too honorable to be employed on rogues. But as by water we came, by water we should go." The sentence was received with a shout; and amid laughter, furious cries, and threats of vengeance, we were dragged to the mouth of the cave.

There was a new scene. The tempest was appalling. The waves burst into the anchorage in huge heaps, dashing she of foam up to its roof. The wind volleyed in gusts, that to the strongest off their feet; the galleys at anchor were tossed as if they were so many weeds on the surface of the water. Lamps and torches were useless, and the only light was from the funereal gleam of the billows, and the sheets of sulfurous fire that fell upon the turbulence of ocean beyond. Even the hardy forms round me were startled, and I took advantage of a furious gust that swung us all aside, to struggle from their grasp, and seizing a pike, fight for my life. Jubal seconded me with the boldness that no decay could exhaust, and setting our backs to the rocks, we for a while baffled our executioners. But this could not last against such numbers. Our pikes were broken; we were hemmed in, and finally dragged again to the mouth of the cavern, that with its foam and the howl of the tumbling billows looked like the jaws of some huge monster ready for its prey.

Bruised and overpowered, I was on the point of denying my murderers their last indulgence, and plunging headlong, when a trumpet sounded. The pirates loosed their hold, and in a few minutes a large galley with all her oars broken and every sail torn to fragments shot by the mouth of the cavern. A joyous cry of, "The captain! the captain!" echoed through the vaults. The galley, disabled by the storm, tacked several times before she could make the entrance; but at length, by a masterly maneuver, she was brought round, and darted right in on the top of a mountainous billow. Before she touched the ground, the captain had leaped into the arms of the band, who received him with shouts. His quick eye fell upon us at once, and he demanded fiercely what we were. "Spies and thieves" was the general reply.

"Spies!" he repeated, looking contemptuously at our habiliments—"impossible. Thieves, very likely, and very beggarly ones."

I denied both imputations alike. He seemed struck by my words, and said to the crowd: "Folly! Take them away, if it does not require too much courage to touch them; and let

The Captain's Story

them be washed and fed for the honor of hospitality and their own faces. Here, change my clothes and order supper."

I attempted to explain how we came.

"Of course—of course," said the captain, pulling off his dripping garments and flinging his cloak to one, his cuirass to another, and his cap to a third. "Your rags would vouch for you in any port on earth. Or, if you carry on the trade of treachery, you are very ill paid. Why, Memnon, look at these fellows; would you give a shekel for their souls and bodies? Not a mite. When I look for spies, I expect to find them among the prosperous. However, if you turn out to be spies, eat, drink, and sleep your best to-night, for you shall be hanged to-morrow."

He hurried onward, and we followed, still in durance. The banquet was reinstated, and the principal personages of the band gathered round to hear the adventures of the voyage.

"All has been ill luck," said the captain, tossing off a bumper. "The old procurator's spirit was, I think, abroad either to take care of his plate or to torment mankind, according to his custom. We were within a boat's length of the prize when the wind came right in our teeth. Everything that could, ran for the harbor; some went on the rocks; some straight to the bottom; and that we might not follow their example, I put the good ship before the wind, and never was better pleased than to find myself at home. Thus you see, comrades, that my history is brief; but then it has an advantage that history sometimes denies itself—every syllable of it is true."

As the light of the lamps fell on him, it struck me that his face was familiar to my recollection. He was young, but the habits of his life had given him a premature manhood; his eye flashed and sparkled with Eastern brilliancy, but his cheek, after the first flush of the banquet, was pale; and the thinness of a physiognomy naturally masculine and noble, showed that either care or hardship had lain heavily upon his days. He had scarcely sat down to the table when, his glance turning where we stood guarded, he ordered us to be brought before him.

"I think," said he, "you came here but a day or two ago. Did you find no difficulty with our sentinels?"

"Ha!" exclaimed the Arab, "how could I have forgotten that? I left Titus, or by whatever of his hundred names he chose to be called, on guard, at his own request, the day I steered for the Nile. He was sick, or pretended to be so; and as I gave myself but a couple of days for the voyage, I expected to be back in time to save him from the horrors of his own company. But the wind said otherwise—the two days were ten; and on my return we found the wretched fellow a corpse—whether from being taken ill and unable to help himself, or from the assistance of those worthy persons here whom we discovered in attendance."

"On that subject I have no doubt whatever," interposed the Egyptian; "those villains murdered him."

"It is possible," mused the captain; "but I can not foresee what they are to get by it. A question that you at least will acknowledge to be of considerable importance," said he, with a careless smile at the Egyptian, whose avarice was proverbial.

The object of satire was stung, and to get rid of the dangerous topic, he affected wrath and said impetuously:

"Let it be so; let our blood go for nothing; let treachery thrive; let our throats be at the mercy of every wandering ruffian; and let us have the consolation that our labors and our sacrifices will be honored with a sneer."

He turned to the crowd waiting round us. "Brave comrades," exclaimed he, "henceforth understand that you are at every dagger's mercy; that if you are left behind, you may be assassinated with impunity, as, if you are taken out upon our foolish expeditions, your lives may be flung away upon the whims and follies of would-be heroes."

The crowd, fickle and inflamed by wine, gave a huzza for the "sailor's friend." The Egyptian encouraged, and having a load of gall upon his memory, made the desperate venture of at once disowning the authority of the captain, and ordering in his own name that we should be delivered over to execution.

Intrigue a Letter

The captain listened without a word, but his hand was on his simitar, and his cheek burned, as he fixed his eyes on the livid accuser.

The crowd pressed closer upon us, and I saw the dagger pointed at my breast, when I recollected the letter. I gave it to the captain, who read it in silence, and then, with the utmost composure, desired it to be handed over to the Egyptian.

"Comrades," said he, "I have to apologize for a breach of the confidence that should always subsist between men of honor. I have here accidentally read a letter which the cipher shows to have been intended for our trusty friend Memnon; but since the subject is no longer confined to himself, he will doubtless feel no objection to indulging us all with the correspondence."

The band thronged round the table; expectation sat on every face, and its various expression in the crowded circle of those strong physiognomies—the keen, the wondering, the angry, the contemptuous, the convinced, the triumphant—would have made an incomparable study for a painter. The Egyptian took the letter with a trembling hand and read the fatal words.

"The fleet will be off the northern promontory by midnight. You will light a signal, and be ready to conduct the troops into the cavern."

The reader let the fatal despatch fall from his hands.

An outcry of wrath rose on all sides, and the traitor was on the point of being sacrificed when the young Idumean generously started forward.

"It is known, I believe, to every man here," said he, "that I dislike and distrust Memnon as much as any being on earth. I know him to be base and cruel, and therefore hate him. I have long suspected him of being connected with transactions that nothing but the madness of avarice could venture upon, and nothing but death atone. But he must not perish without a trial. Till inquiry is made, the man who strikes him must strike through me."

He placed himself before the culprit, who now taking cour-

age, long and dexterously insisted that the letter was a forgery, invented by "assassins and those who employed assassins." The Egyptian's Treachery

The tide of popular wisdom is easily turned; opinion was now raging against me, and the Egyptian stood a fair chance of seeing his reputation cleared in my blood.

"Come," said the captain, rising, "as we are not likely to gain much information from the living, let us see whether the dead can give us any: lead on, prisoners."

I led the way to the recess. The dead man lay untouched; but in the interval the features had returned, as is often the case in death, to the expression of former years. I uttered an exclamation; he was the domestic who had betrayed me to the procurator.

"Conscience!" cried the Egyptian.

"Conscience!" echoed the crowd.

The captain turned to me. "Did either you or your companion commit this murder? I will have no long stories. I know that this fellow was a villain, and if he had lived until my return, he should have fed the crows within the next twelve hours. One word—yes or no?"

I answered firmly.

"I believe you," said the captain. He took the hand of the corpse, and called to the Egyptian. "Take this hand, and swear that you know nothing of the treason. But, ha! what have we here?"

As he lifted the arm, the sleeve of the tunic gave way, and a slip of papyrus fell on the bed. He caught it up, and exclaiming, "What! to-night? pernicious villain!" turned to the astonished band.

"Comrades, there is treachery among us. We are sold—sold by that accursed Egyptian. Strip the slave, and fling him into the dungeon until I return; no, he shall come with us in chains. Call up the men. Every galley must put to sea instantly, if we would not be burned in our beds."

The trumpets sounded through the cavern, and rapid preparations were made for obeying this unexpected command. The fires blazed again; arms and armor rang; men were mus-

Preparing for the Escape

tered, and the galleys swung out from their moorings, in the midst of tumult and volleys of execrations against the treachery that "could not wait, at least, for daylight and fair weather."

"And now," said the captain, "I think that it is time for me to sup. Sit down, and let us hear over our wine what story the prisoners have to tell."

I briefly stated our escape from the dungeon.

"It may be a lie; yet the thing hangs not badly together. Your wardrobe speaks prodigiously in favor of your veracity. Ho, Ben Ali! see that the avenue into the warehouse is stopped up. We must have no visits from the garrison of the tower."

He had soon a group of listeners round the table.

"As I was lying off and on, waiting to catch that galley, a correspondent on shore let me partly into the secret of that Egyptian dog's dealings. Rich as the knave was—and how he came by his money, Tartarus only knows—Roman gold had charms for him still. In fact, he had been carrying on a very handsome trade in information during the last six months, which may best account for the escape of two fleets from Byzantium, and not less for the present safety of the procurator's plate, which, however, I hope, by the blessing of Neptune, to see before another week shining upon this table."

Then, turning to me, he laughingly said: "Tho I should not trust you for pilotage, your discovery was of use. That an attack upon us was intended I was aware; but the how and the when were the difficulty. The time of the attack was announced in the papyrus, and but for the storm we should probably be now doing other things than supping."

"The sea is going down already, and the wind has changed," said the Arab. "We can haul off the shore without loss of time."

"Then the sooner the better. We must seal up the Romans in their port, or if they venture out on such a night, give them sound reason for wishing that they had stayed at home. Their galleys, if good for nothing else, will do to burn."

This bold determination was received with a general cheer; the crews drank to the glory of their expedition, and all rushed toward the galleys, which, crowded with men, lay tossing at the edge of the arch. The Company of the Free-Traders

I followed, and demanded what was to be our fate.

"What will you have?"

"Anything but abandonment here. Let us take the chances of your voyage, and be set on shore at the first place you touch."

"And sell our secret to the best bidder? No. But I have no time to make terms with you now. One word for all; ragged as you both are, you are strong, and your faces would do no great discredit to our profession. You probably think this no very striking compliment," said he, laughing. "However, I have taken a whim to have you with us and offer you promotion. Will you take service with the noble company of the Free-trade?"

Jubal was rashly indignant; I checked him, and merely answered that I had purposes of extreme exigency which prevented my accepting his offer.

"Ha, morality!" exclaimed he, "you will not be seen with rogues like us?" He laughed aloud. "Why, man, if you will not live, eat, drink, travel, and die with rogues, where upon earth can you expect to live or die? The difference between us and the world is that we do the thing without the additional vice of hypocrisy."

The bold fellows who waited round us felt for the honor of their calling, and but for their awe of the captain we had stood slight chance of escape.

"A pike might let a little light into their understandings," said one.

"If they will not follow on the deck, they should swim at the stern," said another.

"The hermits should be sent back to their dungeon," said a third.

The boat was now run up on the sand.

"Get in," said the captain. "I have taken it into my head to convince you by fact of the honor, dignity, and

The Captain's Calling

primitiveness of our profession, which is, in the first place, the oldest, for it was the original employment of all human hands; in the next place, the most universal, for it is the principle of all trades, pursuits, and professions, from the Emperor on his throne down through the doctor, the lawyer, and the merchant, to the very sediment of society."

A loud laugh echoed through the cavern.

While he was arranging his corselet and weapons round him, the captain proceeded: "The Free-trade is the essence of the virtues. For example, I meet a merchantman loaded with goods—for what is the cargo meant? To purchase slaves; to tear fathers from their families—husbands from their wives; to burn villages, and bribe savages to murder each other. I strip the hold; the slave-market is at an end, and none suffer but fellows who ought to have been hanged long ago."

The captain's doctrine was more popular than ever.

"I see, comrades," said the captain, "that tho truth is persuasive, your huzza is not for me, but for fact. We find a young rake ranging the world with more money than brains, sowing sedition among the fair rivals for the honor of sharing his purse; running away with daughters; gambling greater fools than himself out of their fortunes; in short, playing the profligate in all shapes. He drops into our hands, and we strip him to the last penny. What is the consequence? We make him virtuous on the spot. The profligate becomes a model of penitence; the root of all his ills has been unearthed; the prodigal is saving; the bacchanal temperate; the seducer lives in the innocence of a babe; the gambler never touches a die. We have broken the mainspring of his vices—money; disarmed the soft deceiver of his spell—money; checked the infection of the gambler's example by cutting off the source of the disease—money; or if nothing can teach him common sense, our dungeon will at least keep him out of harm's way. We meet a rich old rogue," continued he, "on his voyage between the islands. What is he going to do? To marry some young creature who has a young lover, perhaps a dozen. The marriage would break her heart and raise a little rebellion in the island. We capture the old Cupid, strip him of

his coin, and he is a Cupid no more; fathers and mothers abhor him at once; the young lover has his bride and the old one his lesson; the one gets his love and the other his experience; and both have to thank the gallant crew of the *Scorpion*, which may Neptune long keep above water."

On Board the Galleys

A joyous shout and the waving of caps and swords hailed the captain's display. "The Free-trade forever!" was cheered in all directions.

"And now, my heroes of salt water, noble brothers of the Nereids, sons of the starlight, here I make libation to fortune."

He poured a part of his cup into the wave, and drank to the general health with the remainder.

"Happiness to all! Let our work to-night be what it will, I know, my heroes, that it will be handsomely done. The enemy may call us names, but you will answer them by proofs that, whatever we may be, we are neither slaves nor dastards. If I catch the insolent commander of the Roman fleet, I will teach him a lesson in morals that he never knew before. He shall flog, fleece, and torture no more. I will turn the hard-hearted tyrant into tenderness from top to toe. His treatment of the crew of the *Hyœna* was infamous; and, by Jupiter! what I owe him shall be discharged in full. Now on board, and may Neptune take care of you!"

The trumpets flourished, the people cheered, the boats pushed off, the galleys hoisted every sail, and in a moment we found ourselves rushing through the water under the wildest canopy of heaven.

CHAPTER XXXIX

A Sea Fight

The Captain as Seaman

We stretched out far to sea, for the double purpose of falling by surprise upon the Roman squadron and of avoiding the shoals. The wind lulled at intervals so much that we had recourse to our oars; it would then burst down with a violence that all but hurled us out of the water. I now saw more of the captain, and was witness to the extraordinary activity and skill of this singular young man. Never was there a more expert seaman. For every change of sea or wind he had a new expedient; and when the hearts of the stoutest sank, he took the helm into his hands and carried us through the chaos of foam, whirlwind, and lightning with the vigor of one born to sport with the storm.

As I was gazing over the vessel's side at the phosphoric gleams that danced along the billows, he came up to me.

"I am sorry," said he, "that we have been compelled to give you so rough a specimen of our hospitality, and this is not altogether a summer sea, but you saw how the matter stood. The enemy would have been upon us, and the whole advantage of our staying at home would be to have our throats cut in company."

Odd and rambling as his style was, there was something in his manner and voice that had struck me before, even in the boisterousness of the convivial crowd. But now, in the solitary sea, there was a melancholy sweetness in his tones that made me start with sad recollection. Yet, when by the lightning I attempted to discover in his features any clue to memory, and saw but the tall figure wrapped in the sailor's cloak, the hair streaming over his face in the spray, and every line of his powerful physiognomy at its full stretch in the agitation of the time, the thought vanished again.

"I hinted," said he, after an interval of silence, "at your taking chance with us. If you will, you may. But the hint was thrown out merely to draw off the fellows about me, and you are at full liberty to forget it." His Request

"It is impossible to join you," was my answer; "my life is due to my country."

"Oh, for that matter, so is mine, and due a long time ago; my only wonder is, how I have evaded payment till now. Bur I am a man of few words. I have taken a sort of liking to you, and would wish to have a few such at hand. The world calls me pirate, and the majority, of course, carries the question. For its opinion I do not care a cup of water; a bubble would weigh as heavily with me as the rambling, giddy, vulgar judgment of a world in which the first of talents is knavery. I never knew a man fail who brought to market prostitution of mind enough to make him a tool, vice enough to despise everything but gain, and cunning enough to keep himself out of the hands of the magistrate till opulence enabled him to corrupt the law or authority to defy it. But let that pass. The point between us is, will you take service with us?"

"No! I feel the strongest gratitude for the manliness and the generosity of your protection. You saved our lives, and our only hope of revisiting Judea in freedom is through you. But, young man, I have a great cause in hand. I have risked everything for it. Family, wealth, rank, life, are my stake; and I look upon every hour given to other things as so far a fraud upon my country."

I heard him sigh. There was silence on both sides for a while, and he paced the deck; then suddenly returning, laid his hand on my shoulder.

"I am convinced of your honor," said he, "and far be it from me to betray a man who has indeed a purpose worthy of manhood into our broken and unhappy—aye, let the word come out, infamous career. But you tell me that I have been of some use to you; I now demand the return. You have refused to take service with me. Let me take service with you!"

The Presence of the Roman Fleet

I stared at him. He smiled sadly, and said: "You will not associate with one stained like me. Aye, for me there is no repentance! Yet, why shall the world"—and his voice was full of anguish—"why shall an ungenerous and misjudging world be suffered to keep forever at a distance those whom it has first betrayed?" His emotion got the better of him, and his voice sank. He again approached me. "I am weary of this kind of life. Not that I have reason to complain of the men about me, nor that I dislike the chances of the sea; but that I feel the desire to be something better—to redeem myself out of the number of the dishonored; to do something which, whether I live or die, will satisfy me that I was not meant to be—the outcast that I am."

"Then join us, if you will," said I. "Our cause demands the bold; and the noblest spirit that ever dwelt in man would find its finest field in the deliverance of our land, the land of holiness and glory. But can you leave all that you have round you here?"

"Not without a struggle. I have an infinite delight in this wild kind of existence. I love the strong excitement of hazard; I love the perpetual bustle of our career; I love even the capriciousness of wind and wave. I have wealth in return for its perils; and no man knows what enjoyment is but he who knows it through the fatigue of a sailor's life. All the banquets of Epicureanism are not half so delicious as even the simplest meal to his hunger, nor the softest bed of luxury half so refreshing as the bare deck to his weariness. But I must break up those habits; and whether beggar, slave, or soldier obtaining the distinction of a soldier's success, I am determined on trying my chance among mankind."

A sheet of lightning at this instant covered the whole horizon with blue flame, and a huge ball of fire springing from the cloud, after a long flight over the waters split upon the shore. The keenness of the seaman's eye saw what had escaped mine.

"That was a lucky sea-light for us," said he. "The Romans are lying under yonder promontory, driven to take shelter by the gale, of course; but for that fire-ball they would have escaped me."

All the crew were now summoned on deck; signals were made to the other galleys; the little fleet brought into close order; pikes, torches, and combustibles of all kinds gathered upon the poop; the sails furled, and with muffled oars we glided down upon the enemy. The Roman squadron, with that precaution which was the essential of its matchless discipline, was drawn up in order of battle, tho it could have had no expectation of being attacked on such a night. But the roar of the gale buried every other sound, and we stole round the promontory unheard. Salathiel Gives the Order

The short period of this silent navigation was one of the keenest anxiety. All but those necessary for the working of the vessel were lying on their faces; not a limb was moved, and like a galley of the dead we floated on, filled with destruction. We were yet at some distance from the twinkling lights that showed the prefect's trireme when, on glancing round, I perceived a dark object on the water, and pointed it out to the captain.

"Some lurking spy," said he, "who was born to pay for his knowledge."

With a sailor's promptitude he caught up a lamp and swung it overboard. It fell beside the object, a small boat, as black as the waves themselves.

"Now for the sentinel," were his words, as he plunged into the sea. The act was as rapid as the words. I heard a struggle, a groan, and the boat floated empty beside me on the next billow.

But there was no time to wait for his return. We were within an oar's length of the anchorage. To communicate the probable loss of their captain (and what could human struggle do among the mountainous waves of that sea?) might be to dispirit the crew and ruin the enterprise. I took the command upon myself, and gave the word to fall on.

A storm of fire, as strange to the enemy as if it had risen from the bottom of the sea, was instantly poured on the advanced ships. The surprise was complete. The crews, exhausted by the night, were chiefly asleep. The troops on board were helpless, on decks covered with spray, and among

The Suddenness of Mutiny

shrouds and sails falling down in burning fragments on their heads. Our shouts gave them the idea of being attacked by overwhelming numbers, and after a short dispute we cleared the whole outer line of every sailor and soldier. The whole was soon a pile of flame, a sea volcano that lighted sky, sea, and shore.

Yet only half our work was done. The enemy were now fully awake, and no man could despise Roman preparation. I ordered a fire gallery to run in between the leading ships; but she was caught half-way by a chain, and turned round, scattering flame among ourselves. The boats were then lowered, and our most desperate fellows sent to cut out or board. But the crowded decks drove them back, and the Roman pike was an over-match for our short falchions. For a while we were forced to content ourselves with the distant exchange of lances and arrows. The affair now became critical. The enemy were still three times our force; they were unmooring, and our only chance of destroying them was at anchor. I called the crew forward and proposed that we should run the galley close on the prefect's ship, set them both on fire, and in the confusion carry the remaining vessels. But sailors, if as bold, are as capricious as their element. Our partial repulse had already disheartened them. I was met by clamors for the captain. The clamors rose into open charges that I had, to get the command, thrown him overboard.

I was alone. Jubal, worn out with fatigue and illness, was lying at my feet, more requiring defense than able to afford it. The crowd was growing furious against the stranger. I felt that all depended on the moment, and leaped from the poop into the midst of the mutineers.

"Fools," I exclaimed, "what could I get by making away with your captain? I have no wish for your command. I have no want of your help. I disdain you: bold as lions over the table; tame as sheep on the deck; I leave you to be butchered by the Romans. Let the brave follow me, if such there be among you."

A shallop that had just returned with the defeated boarders,

lay by the galley's side. I seized a torch. Eight or ten, roused by my taunts, followed me into the boat. We pulled right for the Roman center. Every man had a torch in one hand and an oar in the other. We shot along the waters, a flying mass of flame; and while both fleets were gazing on us in astonishment, rushed under the stern of the commander's trireme. The fire soon rolled up her tarry sides and ran along the cordage. But the defense was desperate, and lances rained upon us. Half of us were disabled in the first discharge; the shallop was battered with huge stones, and I felt that she was sinking.

"One trial more, brave comrades, one glorious trial more! The boat must go down, and unless we would go along with it, we must board."

I leaped forward and clung to the chains. My example was followed. The boat went down; and this sight, which was just discovered by the livid flame of the vessel, raised a roar of triumph among the enemy. But to climb up the tall sides of the trireme was beyond our skill, and we remained, dashed by the heavy waves as she rose and fell. Our only alternatives now were to be piked, drowned, or burned. The flames were already rapidly advancing; showers of sparkles fell upon our heads; the clamps and ironwork were growing hot to the touch; the smoke was rolling over us in suffocating volumes. I was giving up all for lost when a mountainous billow swept the vessel's head round, and I saw a blaze burst out from the shore,—the Roman tents were on fire!

Consternation seized the crews, thus attacked on all sides; and uncertain of the number of the assailants, they began to desert the ships and by boats or swimming make for the various points of the land. The sight reanimated me. I climbed up the side of the trireme, torch in hand, and with my haggard countenance, made still wilder by the wild work of the night, looked a formidable apparition to men already harassed out of all courage. They plunged overboard—and I was monarch of the finest war-galley on the coast of Syria.

But my kingdom was without subjects. None of my own crew had followed me. I saw the pirate vessels bearing down

The Conflagration

to complete the destruction of the fleet, and hailed them, but they all swept far wide of the trireme. The fire had taken too fast hold of her to make approach safe. I now began to feel my situation. The first sense of triumph was past, and I found myself deserted. The deed of devastation, meanwhile, was rapidly going on. I saw the Roman ships successively boarded, almost without resistance, and in a blaze. The conflagration rose in sheets and spires to the heavens, and colored the waters to an immeasurable extent with the deepest dye of gore. I heard the victorious shouts, and mine rose spontaneously along with them. In every vessel burned, in every torch flung, I rejoiced in a new blow to the tyrants of Judea. But my thoughts were soon fearfully brought home. The fire reached the cables; the trireme, plunging and tossing like a living creature in its last agony, burst away from her anchors; the wind was off the shore; a gust, strong as the blow of a battering-ram, struck her; and on the back of a huge wave she shot out to sea, a flying pyramid of fire.

CHAPTER XL

A Burning Trireme

NEVER was man more indifferent to the result than the solitary voyager of the burning trireme. What had life for me? I gazed round me. The element of fire reigned supreme. The shore—mountain, vale, and sand—was bright as day from the blaze of the tents and the floating fragments of the galleys. The heavens were an arch of angry splendor—every stooping cloud swept along reddened with the various dyes of the conflagration below. The sea was a rolling abyss of the fiercest color of slaughter. The blazing vessels, loosened from the shore, rushed madly before the storm, sheet and shroud shaking loose abroad like vast wings of flame.

At length all disappeared. The shore faded far into a dim line of light; the galleys sank or were consumed; the sea grew dark again. But the trireme, strongly built and of immense size, still fed the flame, and still shot on through the tempest, that fell on her the more furiously as she lost the cover of the land. The waves rose to a height that often baffled the wind, and left me floating in a strange calm between two black walls of water reaching to the clouds, and on whose smooth sides the image of the burning vessel was reflected as strongly as in a mirror. But the ascent to the summit of those fearful barriers again let in the storm in its rage. The tops of the billows were whirled off in sheets of foam; the wind tore mast and sail away, and the vessel was dashed forward like a stone discharged from an engine. I stood on the poop, which the spray and the wind kept clear of flame, and contemplated, with some feeling of the fierce grandeur of the spectacle, the fire rolling over the forward part of the vessel in a thousand shapes and folds.

While I was thus careering along, like the genius of fire

The Sound of a Voice

upon his throne, I caught a glimpse of sails scattering in every direction before me—I had rushed into the middle of one of those small trading-fleets that coasted annually between the Euxine and the Nile. They flew, as if pursued by a fiend. But the same wind that bore them, bore me; and their screams, as the trireme bounded from billow to billow on their track, were audible even through the roarings of the storm. They gradually succeeded in spreading themselves so far that the contact with the flame must be partial. But on one, the largest and most crowded, the trireme bore inevitably down. The hunted ship tried every mode of escape in vain; it maneuvered with extraordinary skill; but the pursuer, lightened of every burden, rushed on like a messenger of vengeance.

I could distinctly see the confusion and misery of the crowd that covered the deck; men and women kneeling, weeping, fainting, or, in the fierce riot of despair, struggling for some wretched spoil that a few moments more must tear from all alike. But among the fearful mingling of sounds, one voice I suddenly heard that struck to my soul. It alone roused me from my stern scorn of human suffering. I no longer looked upon those beings as upon insects, that must be crushed in the revolution of the great wheel of fate. The heart, the living human heart, palpitated within me. I rushed to the side of the trireme, and with voice and hand made signals to the crew to take me on board. But at my call a cry of agony rang through the vessel. All fled to its farther part, but a few, who, unable to move, were seen on their knees, and in the attitudes of preternatural fear, imploring every power of heaven. Shocked by the consciousness that, even in the hour when mutual hazard softens the heart of man, I was an object of horror, I shrank back. I heard the voice once more, and once more resolving to get on board, flung a burning fragment over the side to help me through the waves.

But the time was past. The fragment had scarcely touched the foam when a sheet of lightning wrapped sea and sky; the flying vessel was gone. My eye looked but upon the wilderness of waters The flash was fatal. It had struck the hold

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The solitary voyager of the burning trireme.

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of my trireme, in which was stowed a large freightage of the bitumen and niter of the desert. A column of flame, white as silver, rose straight and steadily up to the clouds; and the huge ship, disparting timber by timber, reeled, heaved, and plunged headlong into the bosom of the ocean. In a Whirlpool

I rose to the surface from a prodigious depth. I was nearly breathless. My limbs were wasted with famine and fatigue; but the tossing of the surges sustained and swept me on. The chill at last benumbed me, and my limbs were heavy as iron, when a broken mast rolling by entangled me in its cordage. It drove toward a point of land, round which the current swept. Strongly netted in the wreck, I was dragged along, sometimes above the billow, sometimes below. But a violent shock released me, and with a new terror I felt myself go down. I was engulfed in the whirlpool!

Every sensation was horribly vivid. I had the full consciousness of life and of the unfathomable depth into which I was descending. I heard the roar and rushing of the waters round me; the holding of my breath was torture; I strained, struggled, tossed out my arms, and grasped madly around, as if to catch something that might retard my hideous descent. My eyes were open. I never was less stunned by shock or fear. The solid darkness, the suffocation, the furious whirl of the eddy that spun me round its huge circle like an atom of sand—every sense of drowning—passed through my shattered frame with an individual and successive pang. I at last touched something, whether living or dead, fish or stone, I know not; but the impulse changed my direction, and I was darted up to the surface in a little bay sheltered by hills.

The storm had gone with the rapidity of the south. The sun burned bright and broad above my head; the pleasant breath of groves and flowery perfumes came on the waters; a distant sound of sweet voices lingered on the air. Like one roused from a frightful dream, I could scarcely believe that this was reality. But the rolling waters behind gave me sudden evidence. A billow, the last messenger of the storm, burst into the little bay, filled it to the brim with foam, and

A Quiet Spot

tossed me far forward. It rolled back, dragging with it the sedge and pebbles of the beach. I grasped the trunk of an olive, rough and firm as the rock itself. The retiring waves left me; I felt my way some paces among the trees, cast myself down, and, worn out with fatigue, had scarcely reached their shade when I fainted.

I awoke in the decline of the day, as I could perceive by the yellow and orange hues that colored the thick branches above me. I was lying in a delicious recess, crowded with fruit-trees; my bed was the turf, but it was soft as down; a solitary nightingale above my head was sending forth snatches of that melody which night prolongs into the very voice of sweetness and sorrow; and a balmy air from the wild thyme and blossoms of the rose breathed soothingly even to the mind.

I had been thrown on one of the little isles that lie off Anthædon, a portion of the Philistine territory before it was won by our hero the Maccabee. The commerce which once filled the arm of the sea near Gaza had perished in the change of masters, and silence and seclusion reigned in a spot formerly echoing with the tumult of merchant and mariner. The little isle, the favorite retreat of the opulent Greek and Syrian traders in the overpowering heats of summer, and cultivated with the lavish expenditure of commercial wealth, now gave no proof of its ever having felt the foot of man, but in the spontaneous exuberance of flowers, once brought from every region of the East and West, and the exquisite fruits that still glowed on its slopes and dells.

In all things else Nature had resumed her rights; the gilded pavilions, the temples of Parian and Numidian stone, were in ruins, and buried under a carpet of roses and myrtles. The statues left but here and there a remnant of themselves, a lovely relic, wreathed over in fantastic spirals by the clematis and other climbing plants. The sculptured fountain let its waters loose over the ground, and the guardian genius that hung in marble beauty over the spring had long since resigned his charge and lay mutilated and discolored with the air and the dew. But the spring still gushed, bounding

bright between the gray fissures of the cliff, and marking its course through the plain by the richer mazes of green. A Retu

To me, who was as weary of existence as ever was galley-slave, this spot of quiet loveliness had a tenfold power. My mind, like my body, longed for rest.

Through life I had walked in a thorny path; my ambition had winged a tempestuous atmosphere. Useless hazards, wild projects, bitter sufferings, were my portion. Those feelings in which alone I could be said to live had all been made inlets of pain. The love which nature and justice won from me to my family was perpetually thwarted by a chain of circumstances that made me a wretched, helpless, and solitary man. What then could I do better than abandon the idle hope of finding happiness among mankind; break off the trial, which must be prolonged only to my evil; and elude the fate that destined me to be an exile in the world? Yes, I would no longer be a man of suffering, in the presence of its happiness; a wretch stripped of an actual purpose, or a solid hope, in the midst of its activity and triumph; the abhorred example of a career miserable with defeated pursuit, and tantalized with expectations vain as the ripple on the stream!

In this stern resolve, gathering courage from despair—as the criminal on the scaffold scoffs at the world that rejects him—I determined to exclude recollection. The spot round me was henceforth to fill up the whole measure of my thoughts. Wife, children, friends, country, to me must exist no more. I imaged them in the tomb; I talked with them as shadows, as the graceful and lovely existences of ages past,—as hallowed memorials; but labored to divest them of the individual features that cling to the soul.

Lest this mystic repose should be disturbed by any of the sights of living man, I withdrew deeper into the shades which first sheltered me. It was enough for me that there was a canopy of leaves above to shield my limbs from the casual visitations of a sky whose sapphire looked scarcely capable of a stain, and that the turf was soft for my couch. Fruits sufficient to tempt the most luxurious taste were fall-

On the Shores of the Mediterranean

ing round me, and the waters of the bright rivulet, scooped in the rind of citron and orange, were a draft that the epicure might envy. I was still utterly ignorant on what shore of the Mediterranean I was thrown, further than that the sun rose behind my bower and threw his western luster on the waveless expanse of sea that spread before it to the round horizon.

CHAPTER XLI

The Granddaughter of Ananus

Salathiel's Activity

But no man can be a philosopher against nature. With my strength the desire for exertion returned. My most voluptuous rest became irksome. Memory would not be restrained; the floodgates of thought opened once more, and to resist the passion for the world, I was driven to the drudgery of the hands. I gathered wood for the winter's fuel, in the midst of days when the sun poured fire from the heavens; I attempted to build a hut, beside grottoes that a hermit would love; I trained trees and cultivated flowers where the soil threw out all that was rich in both with exhaustless prodigality.

Yet no expedient would appease the passion for the absorbing business of the world. My bower lost its enchantment; the delight of lying on beds of violet, and with my eyes fixed on the heavens, wandering away in rich illusion, palled upon me; the colors of the vision had grown dim. I no longer saw shapes of beauty winging their way through the celestial azure; I heard no harmonies of spirits on the midnight winds; I followed no longer the sun, rushing on his golden chariot-wheels to lands unstained by human step, or plunged with him at eve into the depths and ranged the secret wonders of ocean.

Labor in its turn grew irksome. I began to reproach myself for the vulgar existence which occupied only the inferior portion of my nature; living only for food, sleep, and shelter, what was I better than the seals that basked on the shore at my feet? Night, too—that mysterious rest, interposed for purposes of such varied beneficence: to cool the brain, fevered by the bustle of the day; to soften mutual hostility, by a pause to which all alike must yield; to remind our forgetful

The Island Prison

nature, by a perpetual semblance, of the time when all things must pass away, and be silent, and sleep; to sit in judgment on our hearts, and by a decision which no hypocrisy can disguise, anticipate the punishment of the villain, as it gives the man of virtue the foretaste of his reward—night began to exert its old influence over me; and with the strongest determination to think no more of what had been, I closed my eyes but to let in the past. I might have said that my true sleep was during the labors of the day, and my waking when I lay, with my senses sealed, upon my bed of leaves.

It is impossible to shut up the mind, and I at last abandoned the struggle. The spell of indolence once broken, I became as restless as an eagle in a cage. My first object was to discover on what corner of the land I was thrown. Nothing could be briefer than the circuit of my island, and nothing less explanatory. It was one of those little alluvial spots that grow round the first rock that catches the vegetation swept down by rivers. Ages had gone by, while reed was bound to reed and one bed of clay laid upon another. The ocean had thrown up its sands on the shore; the winds had sown tree and herb on the naked sides of the tall rock; the tree had drawn the cloud, and from its roots let loose the spring. Cities and empires had perished while this little island was forming into loveliness. Thus nature perpetually builds, while decay does its work with the pomp of man. From the shore I saw but a long line of yellow sand across a broad belt of blue waters. No sight on earth could less attract the eye or be less indicative of man.

Yet within that sandy barrier what wild and wondrous acts might be doing, and to be done! My mind, with a pinion that no sorrow or bondage could tame, passed over the desert, and saw the battle, the siege, the bloody sedition, the long and heart-broken banishment, the fierce conflict of passions irrestrainable as the tempest, the melancholy ruin of my country by a judgment powerful as fate, and dreary and returnless as the grave! But the waters between me and that shore were an obstacle that no vigor of imagination could overcome. I was too feeble to attempt the passage by swim-

ming. The opposite coast appeared to be uninhabited, and the few fishing-boats that passed lazily along this lifeless coast evidently shunned the island, as I conceived, from some hidden shoal. I felt myself a prisoner, and the thought irritated me. That ancient disturbance of my mind, which rendered it so keenly excitable, was born again; I felt its coming, and knew that my only resource was to escape from this circumscribing paradise that had become my dungeon. Day after day I paced the shore, awaking the echoes with my useless shouts, as each distant sail glided along close to the sandy line that was now to me the unattainable path of happiness. I made signals from the hill, but I might as well have summoned the vultures to stop as they flew screaming above my head to feed on the relics of the Syrian caravans. Unanswered Signals

What trifles can sometimes stand between man and enjoyment! Wisdom would have thanked Heaven for the hope of escaping the miseries of life in the little enchanted round, guarded by that entrenchment of waters, filled with every production that could delight the sense, and giving to the spirit, weary of all that the world could offer, the gentle retirement in which it could gather its remaining strength and make its peace with Heaven.

I was lying during a fiery noon on the edge of the island, looking toward the opposite coast, the only object on which I could now bear to look, when, in the stillness of the hour, I heard a strange mingling of distant sounds, yet so totally indistinct that, after long listening, I could conjecture it to be nothing but the rising of the surge. It died away. But it haunted me: I heard it in fancy. It followed me in the morn, the noon, and the twilight; in the hour of toil and in the hour when earth and heaven were soft and silent as an infant's sleep—when the very spirit of tranquillity seemed to be folding his dewy wings over the world.

Wearied more with thought than with the daily toil that I imposed on myself for its cure, I had one night wandered to the shore, and lain down under the shelter of those thick woven boughs that scarcely let in the glimpses of the moon. The memory of all whom later chances brought in my path

Salathiel Leaves His Shelter

passed before me—the fate of my gallant kinsmen in Masada, of the wily Ishmaelite, of the pirate captain, of that unhappy crew whose danger was my involuntary deed, of my family scattered upon the face of the world. Arcturus, bending toward the horizon, told me that it was already midnight, when my reverie was broken by the same sounds that had once disturbed my day. But they now came full and distinct. I heard the crashing of heavy axles along the road, the measured tramp of cavalry, the calls of the clarion and trumpet. They seemed beside me. I started from my sand, but all around was still. I gazed across the waters; they were lying, like another sky, reflecting star for star with the blue immensity above—but on them was no living thing.

I had heard of phantom armies traversing the air, but the sky was serene as crystal. I climbed the hill, upon whose summit I recollected to have seen the ruins of an altar; gathered the weeds, and lighted them for a beacon. The flame threw a wide and ruddy reflection on the waters and the sky. I watched by it until morn. But the sound had died as rapidly as it rose; and when, with the first pearly tinge of the east, the coast shaped itself beneath my eye, I saw with bitter disappointment but the same solitary shore. The idea of another day of suspense was intolerable; I returned to my place of refuge; gave it that glance of mingled feeling, without which perhaps no man leaves the shelter which he is never to see again; collected a few fruits for my sustenance, if I should reach the desert; and with a resolution to perish, if it so pleased Providence, but not to return, plunged into the sea.

The channel was even broader than I had calculated by the eye. My limbs were still enfeebled, but my determination was strength. I was swept by the current far from the opposite curve of the shore; yet its force spared mine, and after a long struggle I felt the ground under my feet. I was overjoyed, tho never was scene less fitted for joy. To the utmost verge of the view spread the sands, a sullen herbless waste, glowing like a sheet of brass in the almost vertical sun.

But I was on land! I had accomplished my purpose.

Hope, the power of exertion, the chances of glorious future life, were before me. I was no longer a prisoner, within the borders of a spot which, for all the objects of manly existence, might as well have been my grave.

I journeyed on by sun and star in that direction which, to the Jew, is an instinct—to Jerusalem. Yet what fearful reverses, in this time of confusion, might not have occurred even there! What certainty could I have of being spared the bitterest losses, when sorrow and slaughter reigned through the land? Was I to be protected from the storm, that fell with such promiscuous fury upon all? I, too, the marked, the victim, the example to mankind! I looked wistfully back to the isle—that isle of oblivion.

While I was pacing the sand that actually scorched my feet, I heard a cry, and saw on a low range of sand-hills, at some distance, a figure making violent gestures. Friend or enemy, at least here was man, and I did not deeply care for the consequences, even of meeting man in his worst shape. Hunger and thirst might be more formidable enemies in the end; and I advanced toward the half-naked savage, who, however, ran from me, crying out louder than ever. I dragged my weary limbs after him, and at length reached the edge of a little dell in which stood a circle of tents. I had fallen among the robbers of the desert, but there was evident confusion in this fragment of a tribe. The camels were in the act of being loaded; men and women were gathering their household matters with the haste of terror; and dogs, sheep, camels, and children set up their voices in a general clamor.

Dreading that I might lose my only chance of refreshment and guidance, I cried out with all my might, and hastened down toward them; but the sight of me raised a universal scream, and every living thing took flight, the horsemen of the colony gallantly leading the way, with a speed that soon left the pedestrians far in the rear. But their invader conquered only for food. I entered the first of the deserted tents, and indulged myself with a full feast of bread, dry and rough as the sand on which it was baked, and of water, only less bitter than that through which I had swum. Still, all luxury

Girl's entrance

is relative. To me they were both delicious, and I thanked at once the good fortune which had provided so prodigally for those withered monarchs of the sands, and had invested my raggedness with the salutary terror that gave me the fruits of triumph without the toil.

At the close of my feast, I uttered a few customary words of thanksgiving. A cry of joy rang in my ears; I looked round; saw, to my surprise, a bale of carpets walk forward from a corner of the tent, and heard a Jewish tongue imploring for life and freedom. I rapidly developed the speaker, and from this repulsive overture came forth one of the loveliest young females that I had ever seen. Her story was soon told. She was the granddaughter of Ananus,[1] the late high priest, one of the most distinguished of his nation for every lofty quality; but he had fallen on evil days. His resistance to faction sharpened the dagger against him, and he perished in one of the merciless feuds of the city. His only descendant was now before me; she had been sent to claim the protection of her relatives in the south of Judea. But her escort was dispersed by an attack of the Arabs, and in the division of the spoil the sheik of this little encampment obtained her as his share. The robber merchant was on his way to Cæsarea to sell his prize to the Roman governor, when my arrival put his caravan to the rout. To my inquiry into the cause of this singular success, the fair girl answered that the Arabs had taken me for a supernatural visitant, "probably come to claim some account of their proceedings in the late expedition." They had been first startled by the blaze in the island, which by a tradition of the desert was said to be the dwelling of forbidden beings. My passage of the channel was seen, and increased the wonder; my daring to appear alone, among men whom mankind shunned, completed the belief of my more than mortal prowess, and the Arabs' courage abandoned a contest in which "the least that could happen to them was to be swept into the surge, or tossed piecemeal upon the winds."

To prevent the effects of their returning intrepidity, no time was to be lost in our escape. But the sun, which would have

scorched anything but a lizard or a Bedouin to death, kept us prisoners until evening. We were actively employed in the mean time. The plunder of the horde was examined, with the curiosity that makes one of the indefeasible qualities of the fair in all climates; and the young Jewess had not been an inmate of the tent, nor possessed the brightest eyes among the daughters of women, for nothing. With an air between play and revenge, she hunted out every recess in which even the art of Arab thievery could dispose of its produce; and at length rooted up from a hole in the very darkest corner of the tent that precious deposit for which the sheik would have sacrificed all mankind, and even the last hair of his beard—a bag of shekels. She danced with exultation as she poured the shining contents on the ground before me. The Sheik's Shekels

"If ever Arab regretted his capture," said she, "this most unlucky of sheiks shall have cause. But I shall teach him at least one virtue—repentance to the last hour of his life. I think that I see him at this moment frightened into a philosopher, and wishing from the bottom of his soul that he had, for once, resisted the temptation of his trade."

"But what will you do with the money, my pretty teacher of virtue to Arabs?"

"Give it to my preserver," said she, advancing, with a look suddenly changed from sportiveness to blushing timidity; "give it to him who was sent by Providence to rescue a daughter of Israel from the hands of the heathen."

In the emotion of gratitude to me there was mingled a loftier feeling, never so lovely as in youth and woman; she threw up a single glance to heaven, and a tear of piety filled her sparkling eye.

"But, temptress and teacher at once," said I, "by what right am I to seize on the sheik's treasury? May it not diminish my supernatural dignity with the tribe to be known as a plunderer?"

"Ha!" said she, with a rosy smile; "who is to betray you but your accomplice? Besides, money is reputation and innocence, wisdom and virtue, all over the world."

Touching, with the tip of one slender finger, my arm as it

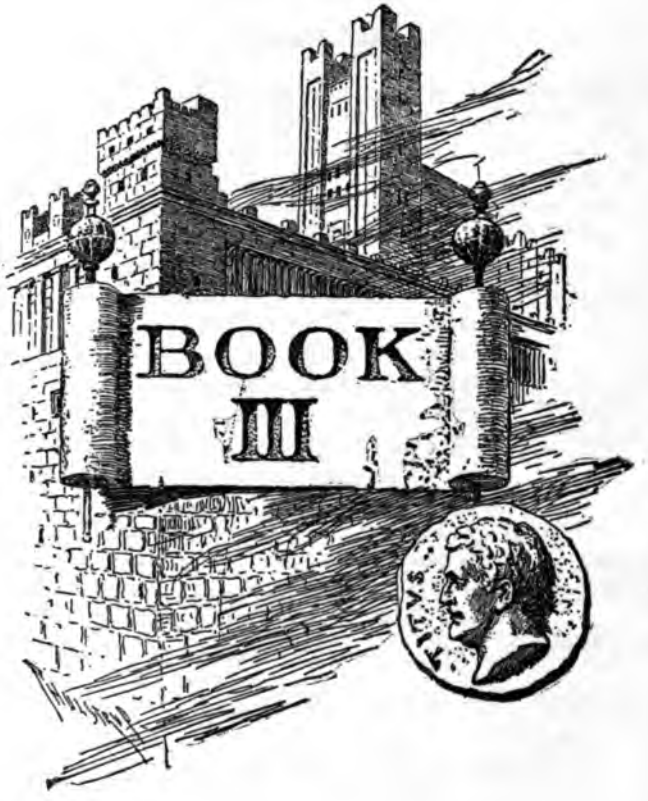
Ben's Sophy

lay folded on my bosom, she waved the other hand, in attitudes of untaught persuasion.

"Is it not true," pleaded the pretty creature, "that next to a crime of our own is the being a party to the crime of others? Now, for what conceivable purpose could the Arab have collected this money? Not for food or clothing; for he can eat thistles with his own camel, and nature has furnished him with clothing as she has furnished the bear. The haik is only an encumbrance to his impenetrable skin. What, then, can he do with money but mischief, fit out new expeditions, and capture other fair maidens, who can not hope to find spirits, good or bad, for their protectors? If we leave him the means of evil, what is it but doing the evil ourselves? So," concluded this resistless pleader, carefully gathering up the spoil and putting it into my hands, "I have gained my cause, and have now only to thank my most impartial judge for his patient hearing."

There is a magic in woman. No man, not utterly degraded, can listen without delight to the accents of her guileless heart. Beauty, too, has a natural power over the mind, and it is right that this should be. All that overcomes selfishness—the besetting sin of the world—is an instrument of good. Beauty is but melody of a higher kind, and both alike soften the troubled and hard nature of man. Even if we looked on lovely woman but as on a rose, an exquisite production of the summer hours of life, it would be idle to deny her influence in making even those summer hours sweeter. But as the companion of the mind, as the very model of a friendship that no chance can shake, as the pleasant sharer of the heart of heart, the being to whom man returns after the tumult of the day, like the worshiper to a secret shrine, to revive his nobler tastes and virtues at a source pure from the evil of the external world, where shall we find her equal, or what must be our feelings toward the mighty Disposer of earth, and all that inhabit it, but of admiration and gratitude for that disposal which thus combines our fondest happiness with our purest virtue?

END OF BOOK II.


BOOK
III

CHAPTER XLII

Naomi's Story

THE evening came at last; the burning calm was followed by a breeze breathing of life, and on the sky sailed, as if it were wafted by that gentle breeze, the evening star. The lifeless silence of the desert now began to be broken by a variety of sounds, wild and sad enough in themselves, but softening by distance, and not ill suited to that declining hour which is so natural an emblem of the decline of life. The moaning of the shepherd's horn; the low of the folding herds; the long, deep cry of the camel; even the scream of the vulture wheeling home from some recent wreck on the shore, and the howl of the jackal venturing out on the edge of dusk, came with no unpleasing melancholy upon the wind. We stood gazing impatiently from the tent door, at the west, that still glowed like a furnace of molten gold.

"Will that sun never go down?" I exclaimed. "We must wait his leisure, and he seems determined to tantalize us."

"Yes; like a rich old man, determined to try the patience of his heirs, and more tenacious of his wealth the more his powers of enjoyment decay," said the Jewess.

"Philosophy from those young lips! Yet the desert is the place for a philosopher."

"That I deny," said my sportive companion. "Philosophy is good for nothing where it has nothing to ridicule, and where it will be neither fed nor flattered. Its true place is the world, as much as the true place of yonder falcon is wherever it can find anything to pounce upon. Here your philosopher must labor for himself and laugh at himself—an indulgence in which he is the most temperate of men. In short, he is fit only for the idle, gay, ridiculous, and timid world. The desert is the soil for a much nobler plant. If you would train a poet into flower, set him here."

"Or a plunderer."

"No doubt. They are sometimes much the same."

"Yet the desert produces nothing—but Arabs."

"There are some minds, even among Arabs, and some their rhapsodies are beauty itself. The very master of t tent, who fought and killed, I dare not say how many, to cure so precious a prize as myself, and who, after all heroism, would have sold me into slavery for life, spent h his evenings sitting at this door chanting to every star heaven, and riming, with tears in his eyes, to all kinds tender remembrances."

"But perhaps he was a genius, a heaven-born accident, his merit was the more in being a genius in the midst of s a scene."

"No—everything round us this hour is poetry. The sile —those broken sounds that make the silence more striking they decay—those fiery continents of cloud, the empire of t greatest of sheiks, the sun, lord of the red desert of the ai the immeasurable desert below. Vastness, obscurity, and t ror, the three spirits that work the profoundest wonders of poet, are here in their native region. And now," she sa with a look that showed there were other spells than poe to be found in the desert, "to release you, I know, by si infallible, that the sun is setting."

I could not avoid laughing at the mimic wisdom with wh she announced her discovery, and asked whence she had quired the faculty of solving such rare problems.

"Oh, by my incomparable knowledge of the stars." pointed to the eastern sky, on which they began to cluste showers of diamond. "I have to thank the desert for and," she added, with a slight submission of voice, "for eve thing. I am a daughter of the desert; the first sight tha saw was a camel; my early, my only accomplishments w to ride, sing Bedouin songs, tell Bedouin stories, and ta a young panther. But my history draws to a close. Wh I was supreme in the graces of a savage, had learned to si dromedary, throw the lance, make haiks, and gallop fo week together, love, resistless love, came in my way.

son of a sheik, heir to a hundred quarrels and ten thousand sheep, goats, and horses, claimed me as his natural prey. I shrank from a husband even more accomplished than myself, and was meditating how to make my escape, whether into the wilderness or into the bottom of the sea, when a summons came which, or the money that came with it, the sheik found irresistible. And now my history is at an end."

"And so," said I, to provoke her to the rest of her narrative, "your story ends, as usual, with marriage. You, of course, finding that you had nothing to prevent your leaving the desert, took the female resolution of remaining in it, and as you might discard the young sheik at your pleasure, refused to have any other human being."

"Can you think me capable of such a horror?"

She stamped her little foot in indignation on the ground; then turning on me with her flashing eye, penetrated the stratagem at once by my smile.

"Then hear the rest. I instantly mounted my dromedary, galloped for three days without sleep, and at length saw the towers of Jerusalem—glorious Jerusalem. I passed through crowds that seemed to me a gathering of the world; streets that astonished me with a thousand strange sights; and, overwhelmed with magnificence, delight, and fatigue, arrived at a palace, where I was met by a host of half-adoring domestics, and was led to the most venerable and beloved of wise and holy men, who caught me to his heart, called me his Naomi, his child, his hope, and shed tears and blessings on my head, as the sole survivor of his illustrious line." She burst into tears.

The recollection of the good and heroic high priest was strong with us both, and in silence I suffered her sorrows to have their way. A faint echo of horns and voices roused me.

"Look to the hills!" I exclaimed, as I saw a long black line creeping, like a march of ants, down the side of a distant ridge of sand.

"Those are our Arabs," said she, without a change of countenance. "They are, of course, coming to see what the angel, or demon, who visited them to-day has left in witness of his

The Spirited Steeds

presence. But from what I overheard of their terrors, no Arab will venture near the tents till night; night, the general veil of the iniquities of this amusing and very wicked world."

"Yet how shall we traverse the sands on foot?"

"Forbid it, the spirit of romance," said she. "I must see whether the gallantry of the sheik has not provided against that misfortune."

She flew into the tent, and, drawing back a curtain, showed me two mares, of the most famous breed of Arabia.

"Here are the Koshlani," said she, with playful malice dancing in her eyes; "I saw them brought in, in triumph, last night, stolen from the pastures of Achmet Ben Ali himself, first horse-stealer and prince of the Bedouins, who is doubtless by this time half dead of grief at the loss of the two gems of his stud. I heard the achievement told with great rejoicings, and a very curious specimen of dexterity it was. Come forth," said she, leading out two beautiful animals, white as milk; "come forth, you two lovely orphans of the true breed of Solomon—princesses with pedigrees that put kings to shame, unless they can go back two thousand years; birds of the Bedouin, with wings to your feet, stars for eyes, and ten times the sense of your masters in your little tossing heads."

She sprang upon her courser, and winded it with the delight of practised skill. The Arabs were now but a few miles off and in full gallop toward us. I urged her to ride away at once, but she continued curveting and maneuvering her spirited steed, that, enjoying the free air of the desert after having been shut up so long, threw up its red nostrils and bounded like a stag.

"A moment yet," said she; "I have not quite done with the Arab. It is certainly bad treatment for his hospitality to have plundered him of his dinner, his money, and his horses."

"And of his captive, a loss beyond all reparation."

"I perfectly believe so," was the laughing answer; "but I have been thinking of making him a reparation which any Arab on earth would think worth even my charms. I have been contriving how to make his fortune."

"By returning his shekels?"

"Not a grain of them shall he ever see. No, he shall not have the sorrow to think that he entertained only a princess and a philosopher. As a spirit you came, and as a spirit you shall depart, and he shall have the honor of telling the tale. The national stories of such matters are worn out; he shall have a new one of his own, and every emir in the kingdoms of Ishmael—through the fiery sands of Ichama, the riverless mountains of Nejd; Hejaz, the country of flies and fools; and Yemen, the land of locusts, lawyers, and merchants, will rejoice to have him at his meal. Thus the man's fortune is made, for there is no access to the heart like that of being necessary to the dinners and dulness of the mighty."

"Or on the strength of the wonder," said I, "he may make wonders of his own, turn charlatan of the first magnitude, profess to cure the incurable, and get solid gold for empty pretension; sell health to the epicure, gaiety to the old, and charms to the repulsive; defy the course of nature, and live like a prince upon the exhaustless revenue of human absurdity."

A cloud of smoke now wreathed up from the sheik's tent; fire followed; and even while we looked on, the wind, carrying the burning fragments, set the whole camp in a blaze. The Arabs gave a universal shriek and fled back, scattering with gestures and cries of terror through the sands.

"There—there," said my companion, clapping her delicate white palms in exultation; "let them beware of making women captives in future. In my final visit to the tent I put a firebrand into the very bundle of carpets in which I played the part of slave."

"Not to be your representative, I presume."

"Yes, with only the distinction that in time I should have been much the more perilous of the two. If that unlucky sheik had dared to keep me a week longer in his detestable tent, I should have raised a rebellion in the tribe, dethroned him, and turned princess on my own account. As to burning him out, there was no remedy. But for those flames the tribe would have been upon our road. But for those flames we

Forward! might even have been mistaken for mere mortals; and your spirits always vanish as we do, in fire and smoke. How nobly those tents blaze! Now, forward!"

She gave the reins to her barb, flung a triumphant gesture toward the burning camp, and under cover of a huge sheet of fiery vapor we darted into the wilderness.

CHAPTER XLIII

Before Masada

Naomi's Gratitude

Our flight lay toward Masada. The stars were brilliant guides, and the coolness of the Arabian night, which forms so singular a contrast to the overpowering ardors of the day, relieved us from the chief obstacle of desert travel. At daybreak we reached a tract, whose broken and burnt-up ground showed that there had lately encamped the army the sound of whose march had startled my reveries in the island.

It was evening when I caught the glimpse of the fortress. My heart trembled at the sight. An impression of evil was upon me. Yet I must go on or die.

"There," said I, "you see my home, and yours while you desire it. You will find friends delighted to receive you, and a protection that neither Roman nor Arab can insult. Heaven grant that all may be as when I left Masada!"

The fair girl gratefully thanked me.

"I have been long," said she, "unused to kindness, and its voice overpowers me. But if the duty, the gratitude, the faithful devotedness of the orphan to her generous preserver can deserve protection, I shall yet have some claim. Suffer me to be your daughter."

She bowed her head before me with filial reverence. I took the outstretched hand, that quivered in mine, and pressed it to my lips. The sacred compact was pledged in the sight of the stars. More formal treaties have been made, but few sincerer.

We rapidly advanced to the foot of the ridge that, now defining and extending, showed its well-known features in all their rugged grandeur. But to come within reach of the gates, I had still one of the huge buttresses of the mountain to go round. My companion, with the quick sympathy that

Signs of Defeat

makes one of the finest charms of women, already shared in my ominous fears, and rode by my side without a word. My eyes were fixed on the ground. I was roused by a clash of warlike music. The suspense was terribly at an end.

The spears of a legion were moving in a glittering line down the farther declivity. Squadrons of horses in marching order were drawn up on the plain. The baggage of a little army lay under the eye, waiting for the escort now descending from the fortress. The story of my ruin was told in that single glance. All was lost!

The walls of the citadel, breached in every direction, gave signs of a long siege. The White Stag of Naphtali no longer lifted its blazon on the battlements; dismantling and desolation were there. But what horrors must have been wrought before the Romans could shake the strength of those walls!

First and most fearful, what had been the fate of Miriam and my children? In what grave was I to look for my noble brother and my kinsmen?

Conscious that to stay was to give myself and my trembling companion to the cruel mercy of Rome, I yet was unable to leave the spot. I hovered round it, as the spirit might hover round the tomb. Maddening with bitter yearnings of heart, that intense eagerness to know the worst which is next to despair, I spurred up the steep by an obscure path that led me to a postern. There was no sound within. I dashed through the streets. Not a living being was to be seen; piles of firewood lighted under the principal buildings and at the gates showed that the fortress was destined to immediate overthrow. War had done its worst. The broad, sanguine plashes on the pavements showed that the battle had been fought, long and desperately, within the walls. The famous armory was a heap of ashes. Ditches dug across the streets and strewed with broken weapons, and the white remnants of what once was man; walls raised within walls, and now broken down; stately houses loopholed and turned into little fortresses; fragments of noble architecture blocking up the breaches; graves dug in every spot where the spade could open a few feet of ground; fragments of superb furniture

lying half burnt where the defenders had been forced out by conflagration—all gave sad evidence of the struggle of brave men against overpowering numbers. Salathiel meets Jubal

But where were they who had made the prize so dear to the conquerors? Was I treading on the clay that once breathed patriotism and love? Did the wreck on which I leaned, as I gazed round this mighty mausoleum, cover the earthly tenement of my kinsmen, and, still dearer, the last of my name? Was I treading on the grave of those gentle and lovely natures for whose happiness I would rejoicingly have laid down the scepter of the world?

In my agitation I cried aloud. My voice rang through the solitude round me, and returned on the ear with a startling distinctness. But living sounds suddenly mingled with the echo. A low groan came from a pile of ruins beside me. I listened, as one might listen for an answer from the sepulcher. The voice was heard again. A few stones from the shattered wall gave way, and I saw thrust out the withered, bony hand of a human being. I tore down the remaining impediments, and beheld pale, emaciated, and at the point of death by famine, my friend, my fellow soldier, my fellow sufferer—Jubal!

Joy is sometimes as dangerous as sorrow. He gave a glance of recognition, struggled forward, and, uttering a wild cry, fell senseless into my arms. On his recovering, before I could ask him the question nearest my heart, it was answered.

"They are safe—all safe," said he. "On the landing of fresh troops from Italy, the first efforts of the legions were directed against the fortress. The pirates, in return for the victory to which you led them, had set me at liberty. I made my way through the enemy's posts; Eleazar, ever generous and noble, received me, after all my wanderings, with the heart of a father, and we determined on defending this glorious trophy of your heroism, to the last man. But with the wisdom that never failed him, he knew what must be the result, and at the very commencement of the siege sent your family away to Alexandria, where they might be sure of protection from our kindred."

Salathiel's Family

"And they went by sea?" I asked shudderingly, while the whole terrible truth dawned upon my mind. They were in the fleet which I had followed.

"It was the only course. The country was filled with the enemy."

"Then they are lost! Wretched father, now no father!—man marked by destiny!—the blow has fallen at last! They perished—I saw them perish. Their dying shrieks rang in these ears. I was their destroyer. From first to last I have been their undoing!"

Jubal looked on me with astonishment. My adopted daughter, without any idle attempt at consolation, only bathed my hand with her tears.

"There must be some misconception in all this," said Jubal. "Before we left that accursed dungeon, they had embarked with a crowd of females from the surrounding country in one of the annual fleets for Egypt. Before we sailed from the pirates' cavern they were probably safe in Alexandria."

"No! I saw them perish. I heard their dying cry. I drove them to destruction," was the only answer that my withering lips could utter. I remembered the horrors of the storm; the desperate efforts of the merchant galley to escape; its fatal disappearance. Faintly, and with many a successive agony, I gave the melancholy reasons for my belief. My auditors listened with fear and trembling.

"There is now no use in sorrow," said Jubal sternly, "and as little in struggle. I too have lived until the light that brightened my dreary hours is extinguished. I too have known the extremities of passion. If suffering could have atoned for my offenses, I have suffered. A thousand years of existence could not teach me more. Here let us die."

He unsheathed his poniard.

My young companion, in the anxiety of the moment, forgetting the presence of a stranger, flung back the veil which had hitherto covered her face and figure, and clasping my raised arm, said in a tone so low, yet penetrating, that it seemed the whisper of my own conscience:

"Has death no fears?" She fixed her eyes on me and waited breathlessly for the answer.

"Daughter of beauty," said Jubal, as a smile of admiration played on his sad features, "thoughts like ours are not for the lovely and the young. May the Heaven that has stamped that countenance be your protection through many a year! But to the weary, rest is happiness, not terror. Prince of Naphtali, this fair maiden's presence forbids darker thoughts; we must speed her on her way to security before we can think of ourselves and our misfortunes."

"The daughter of Ananus," said she, in a tone of heroic pride, "has no earthly fears. The boldest warrior of Israel never died more boldly than that venerable parent. Within his sacred robes was the heart of a soldier, a patriot, and a king. Let me die for a cause like his; at the foot of the altar, let my blood be poured out for my country; let this feeble form sink in the ruins of the Temple, and death will be of all welcome things the most welcome. But I would not die for a fantasy, for idleness, for nothing. Put up that weapon, warrior, and let us go forth and see whether great things are not yet to be done."

She significantly pointed toward Jerusalem.

"It is too late," said Jubal, glancing with a sigh at his own wasted form.

"What?" said the heroine; "is it too late to be virtuous, but not too late to be guilty? Too late to resist the enemies of our country, but not too late to make ourselves worthless to our holy cause? If Heaven demands an account of every wasted talent and misspent hour, what fearful account will be theirs who make all talents and all hours useless at a blow?"

"Maiden, you have not known what it is to lose everything that made earth a place of hope," said I, gazing with wonder and pity on the fine enthusiasm that the world is so fatally empowered to destroy. "May not the tired traveler hasten to the end of his journey without a crime?"

"May not the slave," said Jubal, "weary of his chain, escape unchidden from his captivity?"

Words of Wisdom

"And may not the soldier quit his post when caprice disgusts him with his duty?" was the maiden's answer, with a lofty look. "Or, may not the child break loose from the place of instruction and plead his dislike to discipline? As well may man, placed here for the service of the highest of beings, plead his own narrow will against the supreme command, daringly charge Heaven with the injustice of setting him a task above his strength, and madly insult Its power under the pretext of relying on Its compassion."

She paused, as if surprised at her own earnestness, and blushing, said: "This wisdom is not my own. It was the last gift of an illustrious parent, when in my agony at the sight of his mortal wounds I longed to follow him. 'Live,' said he, 'while you can live with virtue. The God who has placed us on earth best knows when and how to recall us. If self-destruction were no crime in one instance, it would be no crime to universal mankind; the whole frame of society would be overthrown by a permission to evade its duties on the easy penalty of dying. Our obligations to country, family, man, and Heaven would be perpetually flung off, if they were to be held at the caprice of human nature.'"

Jubal looked intently on the young oracle, and tho bending with Oriental deference, was yet unconvinced.

"Is there to be no end to the mind's anxiety but the tardy decay of the frame? Is there no time for the return of the exile, or what is this very feeling of despair but a voice within —an unwritten command to die?"

Naomi turned to me with a look imploring my aid. But I was broken down by the tidings that had now reached me. Jubal wrapped his cloak round him, and was striding into the shadow of the ruin. Naomi, terrified at the idea of death, seized the corner of his mantle.

"Will you shrink from the evils of life," she adjured, "and yet have the dreadful courage to defy the wrath of Heaven? Shall worms like us, shall creatures covered with weaknesses and sins, whose only hope must be in mercy, commit a crime that by its very nature disclaims supplication and makes repentance impossible?"

Naomi's Triumph

With the energy of terror she threw back the folds of the cloak and arrested the hand, with the dagger already uplifted. She led back the reluctant, yet unresisting, step, and said in a voice still trembling: "Prince of Naphtali, save your brother!"

I held out my arms to Jubal; the sternness of his soul was past, and he fell upon my neck. Naomi stood, exulting in her triumph, with the countenance that an angel might wear at the return of a sinner.

"Prince of Naphtali," said she, "if those who were dear to you have perished—which Heaven avert!—you may have been thus but the more marked out for the instrument of solemn services to Israel. The virtues that might have languished in the happiness of home may be summoned into vigor for mankind. Warrior," and she turned her glowing smile on Jubal, "this is not the time for valor and experience to shrink from the side of our country. Perfidy may still be repelled by patriotism; violence put down by wisdom; the power of the people roused by the example of a hero; even the last spark of life may be made splendid by mingling with the last glories of the people of God."

Jubal's wasted cheek reddened with the theme; but his emotion was too deep for language. He led the way; we passed in silence through the deserted streets, and without seeing the face of a human being, reached the dismantled gates of Masada.

CHAPTER XLIV

Among Roman Soldiers

JUBAL guided us down the declivities among ramparts and trenches, and after long windings, where every step reminded me of havoc, brought us to a little hamlet in the recesses of the valley, so secluded that it seemed never to have heard the sound of war. The thunder of the falling masses of fortification, as the fire reached their props, kept us awake all night, and I arose from my humble couch to breathe the delicious air that makes the summer night of Asia the time of refreshment alike to the frame and to the mind. I found Jubal already abroad and gazing on the summit of the mountain, where the sullen glare of the sky and the crash of buildings showed that the work of devastation was rapidly going on.

He gave me some details of the siege. The Romans had found the fortress so hazardous to the advance of their reenforcements that its possession was essential to the conquest of Judea. Cestius, my old antagonist, solicited the command to wipe off his disgrace, and the whole force of the legions was brought up. But the generalship of Eleazar and the intrepidity of the garrison baffled every assault, with tremendous loss of the enemy. The siege was next turned into a blockade. Famine and disease were more formidable than the sword; and the brave defenders were reduced to a number scarcely able to man the walls.

"We now," said Jubal, "fought the battle of despair; we saw the enemy's camp crowded every day with fresh troops, and the provisions of the whole country brought among them in profusion, while we had not a morsel to eat, while our fountains ran dry, and while our few troops were harassed with mortal fatigue. Yet no man thought of surrender. Eleazar's courage—a courage sustained by higher thoughts

than those of the soldier, the fortitude of piety and prayer—inspired us all, and we went to our melancholy duties with the calmness of men to whom the grave was inevitable. The Final Attack

"At last, when our reduced numbers gave the enemy a hope, we were attacked by their whole force. But, if they expected to conquer us at their ease, never were they more deceived. When the walls gave way before their machines, they were fought from street to street, from house to house, from chamber to chamber. Eleazar, as active as he was wise, was everywhere; we fought in ruins—in fire. Multitudes of the enemy perished, and more deaths were given by the knife than the spear, for our arms were long since exhausted. The last effort was made on the spot where you found me. When every defense was mastered by the constant supply of fresh troops, Eleazar, passing through the subterranean to attack the Roman rear, left me in command of the few who survived. We entrenched ourselves in the armory. For three days we fought without tasting food, without an hour's sleep, without laying the weapons out of our hands. At length the final assault was given. In the midst of it we heard shouts which told us that our friends had made the concerted attack, but we were too few and feeble to second it. The shouts died away; we were overpowered, and my first sensation of returning life was the combined agony of famine, wounds, and suffocation, under the ruins that I then thought my living grave."

"By dawn," said I, "we must set out for Jerusalem."

"It has been closely invested," was the answer, "for the last three months;" and famine and faction are doing their worst within the walls. Titus is without, at the head of a hundred thousand of the legionaries and auxiliaries. To enter will be next to impossible, and when once entered, what will be before you but the madness of civil discord, and finally, death by the hands of an enemy utterly infuriated against our nation?"

"To Jerusalem, at all risks," I exclaimed; "my fate is mingled with that of the last stronghold of our fallen people. What matters it to one whose roots of happiness are cut up

The Arrival of Roman Cavalry

like mine, in what spot he struggles with man and fortune? As a son of Judea my powers are due to her cause, and every drop of my blood, shed for any other, would be treason to the memory of my fathers. The dawn finds me on my way to Jerusalem."

"Spoken like a prince of Naphtali," sighed Jubal; "but there I must not follow you. The course of glory is cut off for me; alone, something may still be done by collecting the fugitives of the tribes and harassing the Roman communications. But Jerusalem, tho every stone of her walls is precious to my soul, must not receive my guilty steps. I have horrid recollections of things seen and done there. Onias, that wily hypocrite, will be there to fill me with visions of terror. There, too, are others." He was silent, but suddenly resuming his firmness: "I have no hostility to Constantius; I even honor him; but my spirit is still too feverish to bear his presence—I must live and die, far from all whom I have ever known."

He hid his face in his mantle, but the agitation of his form showed his anguish, more than clamorous grief. He walked forth into the darkness. I was ignorant of his purpose, and lingered long for his return—I saw him no more.

Disturbed and pained by his loss, I had scarcely thrown myself on the cottage floor, my only bed, when I was roused by the cries of the village. A squadron of Roman cavalry marching to Jerusalem had entered, and was taking up its quarters for the night. The peasantry could make no resistance, and attempted none. I had only time to call to my adopted daughter to rise, when our hut was occupied and we were made prisoners.

This was an unexpected blow; yet it was one to which, on second thoughts, I became reconciled. In the disturbed state of the country, traveling was totally insecure, and even to obtain a conveyance of any kind was a matter of extreme difficulty. The roving plunderers who hovered in the train of the camp were, of all plunderers, the most merciless; while, falling into the hands of the legionaries, we were at least sure of an escort; I might obtain some useful information of their

affairs, and once in sight of the city, might escape from the Roman lines with more ease as a prisoner than I could pass them as an enemy.

Salathiel at the Soldier Barbaris

The cavalry moved at daybreak, and before night we saw in the horizon the hills which surround Jerusalem. We had full evidence of our approach to the center of struggle by the devastation that follows the track of the best-disciplined army—groves and orchards cut down, cornfields trampled, cottages burned, gardens and homesteads ravaged. Farther on, we traversed the encampments of the auxiliaries, barbarians of every color and language within the limits of the mightiest of empires.

To the soldier of civilized nations, war is a new state of existence; to the soldier of barbarism, war is but a more active species of his daily life. It requires no divorce from his old habits, and even encourages his old objects, cares, and pleasures. We found the Arab, the German, the Scythian, and the Ethiop hunting, carousing, trafficking, and quarreling, as if they had never stirred from their native regions. The hordes brought with them their families, their cattle, and their trade. In the rear of every auxiliary camp was a regular mart crowded with all kinds of dealers. Through the fields the barbarians were following the sports of home. Trains of falconers were flying their birds at the wild pigeon and heron. Half-naked horsemen were running races, without saddle or rein, on horses as wild and swift as the antelope. Groups were lying under the palm-groves asleep, with their spears fixed at their heads; others were seen busily decorating themselves for battle; crowds were dancing, gaming, and drinking.

As we advanced, we could hear the variety of clamors and echoes that belong to barbarian war—the braying of savage horns, the roars of mirth, rage, and feasting; the shouts of clans moving up to reenforce the besiegers; the screams and lamentations of the innumerable women, as the wains and litters brought back the wounded; the barbarian howlings over the hasty grave of some chieftain; the ferocious revelry of the discoverers of plunder, and the inextinguishable sorrows of the captives.

The Perfection of Discipline

We passed through some miles of this boisterous and bustling scene, in which even a Roman escort was scarcely a sufficient security. The barbarians thronged round us, brandished their spears over our heads, rode their horses full gallop against us, and exhausted the whole language of scorn, ridicule, and wrath upon our helpless condition.

But the clamor gradually died away, and we entered upon another region,—a zone of silence and solitude interposed between the dangerous riot of barbarism and the severe regularity of the legions. Far within this circle, we reached the Roman camp—the world of disciplined war! The setting sun threw a flame on the long vistas of shield and helmet drawn out, according to custom, for the hour of exercise before nightfall. The tribunes were on horseback in front of the cohorts, putting them through that boundless variety of admirable movements in which no soldiery were so dexterous as those of Rome.

But all was done with characteristic silence. No sound was heard but the measured tramp of the maneuver and the voice of the tribune. The sight was at once absorbing to the eye of one like me, an enthusiast in soldiership, and appalling to the lover of his country. Before me was the great machine, the resistless energy that had leveled the strength of the most renowned kingdoms. With the feeling of a man who sees the tempest at hand, in the immediate terror of the bolt, I could yet gaze with wonder and admiration at the grandeur of the thunder-cloud! Before me was at once the perfection of power and the perfection of discipline. Here were no rambling crowds of retainers, no hurrying of troops startled by sudden rumor, no military clamors. All was calm, regular, and grand. In the center of the most furious war ever waged, I might have thought that I saw but a summer camp in an Italian plain.

As the night fell, the legions saluted the parting sun with homage, according to a custom which they had learned in their eastern campaigns. Sounds less of war than of worship arose; flutes breathed in low and sweet harmonies from the lines; and this iron soldiery, bound on the business of ex-

termination, moved to their tents in the midst of strains made to wrap the heart in softness and solemnity.

I rose at dawn. But was I in a land of enchantment? I looked for the immense camp—it had vanished. A few soldiers collecting the prisoners sleeping about the field were all that remained of an army. Our guard explained the wonder. An attack on the trenches, in which the besiegers had been driven in with serious loss, determined Titus to bring up his whole force. The troops had moved with that habitual silence which eluded almost the waking ear. They were now beyond the hills, and the hour was come when the prisoners were ordered to follow them. But where was the daughter of Ananus? I had placed her in a tent with some captive females of our nation. The tent was struck, and its inmates were gone! On the spot where it stood a flock of sheep were already grazing, with a Roman soldier leaning drowsily on his spear for their shepherd.

To what alarms might not this fair girl be exposed? Dubious and distressed, I followed the guard, in the hope of discovering the fate of an innocent and lovely being, who seemed, like myself, marked for misfortune.

In this march we traversed almost the whole circuit of the hills surrounding Jerusalem, and I thus had, for three days, the opportunity that I longed for, of seeing the nature of the force with which we were to contend. The troops were admirably armed. There was nothing for superfluity; yet those who conceived the system knew the value of show, and the equipment of the legions was superb. The helmets, cuirasses, and swords were frequently inlaid with precious metals, and the superior officers rode richly caparisoned chargers, purchased at an enormous price from the finest studs of Europe and Asia. The common soldier was proud of the brightness of his shield and helmet; on duty both were covered, but on their festivals the most cheering moment was when the order was given to uncase their arms. Then nothing could be more magnificent than the aspect of the legion.

One striking source of its pomp was the multitude of its banners. Every emblem that mythology could feign, every

The Methods of Warriors

animal, every memorial connected with the history of soldiership and Rome, glittered above the forest of spears. Gilded serpents, wolves, lions, gods, genii, stars, diadems, imperial busts, and the eagle paramount over all, were mingled with vanes of purple and embroidery. The most showy pageant of civil life was dull and colorless to the crowded splendor of the Roman line.

Their system of maneuver gave this magnificence its full development. With the modern armies the principle is the avoidance of fire. With the ancient armies the principle was the concentration of force. All was done by impulse. The figure by which the greatest weight could be thrown against the enemy's ranks, was the secret of victory. The subtlety of Italian imagination, enlightened by Greek science, and fertilized by the experience of universal war, was occupied in the discovery; and the field exercise of the legions displayed every form into which troops could be shaped for victory. The Romans always sought to fight pitched battles. They left the minor services to their allies, and haughtily reserved themselves for the master strokes by which empires are lost or won. The humbler hostilities, the obscure skirmishings and surprises, they disdained; observing that, while "to steal upon men was the work of a thief, and to butcher them was the habit of a barbarian, to fight them was the act of a soldier."

CHAPTER XLV

The Reign of the Sword

The Traci Invasio

At the close of a weary day we reached our final station, upon the hill of Scopas, seven furlongs from Jerusalem. Bitter memory was busy with me there. From the spot on which I flung myself in heaviness of heart, huddled among a crowd of miserable captives, and wishing only that the evening gathering over me might be my last, I had once looked upon the army of the oppressors marching into my toils and exulted in the secure glories of myself and my country.

But the prospect now beneath the eye showed only the fiery track of invasion. The pastoral beauty of the plain was utterly gone. The innumerable garden-houses and summer dwellings of the Jewish nobles, gleaming in every variety of graceful architecture, among vineyards and depths of aromatic foliage, were leveled to the ground; and the gardens were turned into a sandy waste, cut up by trenches and military works in every direction. In the midst rose the great Roman rampart, which Titus, in despair of conquering the city by the sword, drew round it, to extinguish its last hope of provisions or reenforcements—a hideous boundary, within which all was to be the sepulcher.

I now saw Jerusalem only in her expiring struggle.[1] Others have given the history of that most memorable siege. My knowledge was limited to the last hideous days of an existence long declining, and finally extinguished in horrors beyond the imagination of man.

I knew her follies, her ingratitude, her crimes; but the love of the city of David was deep in my soul; her lofty privileges, the proud memory of those who had made her courts glorious, the sage, the soldier, and the prophet, lights of the world, to which the boasted illumination of the heathen was darkness,

A Night in a Tempest

filled my sprit with an immortal homage. I loved her then—I love her still.

To mingle my blood with that of my perishing country was the first wish of my heart. But I was under the rigor of the confinement inflicted on the Jewish prisoners. My rank was soon known; but while it produced offers of new distinction from my captors, it increased their vigilance. To every temptation I gave the same denial, and occupied my hours in devices for escape. Meanwhile I saw with terror that the wall of circumvallation was closing, and that a short period must place an impassable barrier between me and the city.

I was aroused at midnight by the roaring of one of those tempests which sometimes break in so fiercely upon an Eastern summer. The lightning struck the tower in which I was confined, and I found myself riding on a pile of ruins. Escape, in the midst of a Roman camp, seemed as remote as ever. But the storm which shook walls made its way at will among tents, and the whole encampment was broken up. A column of infantry passed where I was extricating myself from the ruins. They were going to reenforce the troops in the trenches, against the chance of an attack during the tempest. I followed them. The night was terrible. The lightning that blazed with frightful vividness, and then left the sky to tenfold obscurity, alone led us through the lines. The column was too late, and it found the besieged already mounted upon the wall of circumvallation, and flinging it down in huge fragments. The assault and defense were alike desperate. At the moment of our arrival the night had grown pitchy dark, and the only evidence that men were round me was the clang of arms.

A sudden flash showed me that we had reached the foot of the rampart. The besieged, carried away by their native impetuosity, poured down in crowds. Their leader, cheering them on, was struck by a lance and fell. The sight rallied the Romans. I felt that now or never was the moment for my escape. I rushed in front, and called aloud my name. At the voice the wounded leader uttered a cry which I well knew. I caught him from the ground. A gigantic centurion

darted forward and grasped my robe. Embarrassed with my burden, I was on the point of being dragged back; the centurion's sword glittered over my head. With my only weapon, a stone, I struck him a furious blow on the forehead. The sword fell from his grasp; I seized it, and keeping the rest at bay, and in the midst of shouts from my countrymen, leaped the trench, with the nobler trophy in my arms—I had rescued Constantius!

Jerusalem was now verging on the last horrors. I could scarcely find my way through her ruins. The noble buildings were destroyed by conflagration and the assaults of the various factions. The monuments of our kings and tribes were lying in mutilation at my feet. Every man of former eminence was gone. Massacre and exile had been the masters of the higher ranks; and even the accidental distinctions into which the humbler were thrown by the few past years, involved a fearful purchase of public hazard. Like men in an earthquake, the elevation of each was only a sign to him of the working of an irresistible principle of ruin. But the most formidable characteristic was the change wrought in the popular mind.

A single revolution may be a source of public good, but a succession of great political changes is always fatal, alike to public and private virtue. The sense of honor dies in the fierce pressures of personal struggle. Humanity dies in the sight of hourly violences. Conscience dies in the conflict where personal safety is so often endangered that its preservation at length usurps the mind. Religion dies where the religious man is so often the victim of the unprincipled. Violence and vice are soon found to be the natural instruments of triumph in a war of the passions; and the more relentless atrocity carries the day, until selfishness—the mother of treachery, rapine, and carnage—is the paramount principle. Then the nation perishes, or is sent forth in madness and misery, an object of terror and infection, to propagate evil through the world.

The very features of the popular physiognomy were changed. The natural vividness of the countenance was there, but hard-

The Wrecks of Pillage

ened by habitual ferocity. I was surrounded by a multitude, in each of whom I was compelled to see the assassin. The keen eye scowled with cruelty; the cheek wore the alternate flush and paleness of desperate thoughts. The hurried gatherings, the quick quarrel, the loud blasphemy, told me the infuriate temper that had fallen, for the last curse, on Jerusalem. Scarcely a man passed me of whom I could not have said: "There goes one from a murder or to a murder."

But even more open evidences startled me, accustomed as I was to scenes of military violence. I saw men stabbed in familiar greetings in the streets; mansions set on fire and burned in the face of day, with their inmates screaming for help, and yet unhelped; hundreds slain in rabble tumults, of which no one knew the origin. The streets were covered with the wrecks of pillage, sumptuous furniture plundered from the mansions of the great, and plundered for the mere love of ruin; mingled with the more hideous wrecks of man—unburied bodies, left to whiten in the blast or to be torn by the dogs.

Three factions divided Jerusalem, even while the Roman battering-rams were shaking her colossal towers; three armies fought night and day within the city. Streets undermined, houses battered down, granaries burned, wells poisoned, the perpetual shower of death upon each other from the roofs, made the external hostility trivial; and the Romans required only patience to have been bloodless masters of a city which yet they would have found only a tomb of its people.

I wandered day by day, an utter stranger, through Jerusalem. All the familiar faces were gone. At an early period of the war, many of the higher ranks, foreseeing the event, had left the city; at a later, my victory over Cestius, by driving back the enemy, had given a free passage to a crowd of others. It was at that time remarked that the crowd were chiefly Christians, and a singular prophecy of their Master was declared to be the warning of their escape. It is certain that of His followers, including many even of our priests and learned men, scarcely one remained.[4] They said that the evil day, menaced by the divine Wisdom, through Moses (may

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I had rescued Constantius.

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he rest in glory!) was come; that the death of their Master was the consummate crime; and that the Romans, the predicted nation of destroyers, the people "of a strange speech," flying on "eagle wings from the ends of the earth," were already commissioned against a land stained with the blood of the Messiah. Salathiel Apostrophi

Fatally was the word of the great prophet of Israel accomplished; fearfully fell the sword, to smite away root and branch; solemnly, and by a hand which scorned the strength of man, was the deluge of ruin let loose against the throne of David. And still through almost two thousand years, the flood of desolation is at the full; no mountain-top is seen rising above; no spot is left clear for the sole of the Jewish foot; no dove returns with the olive.

Eternal King, shall this be forever? Wilt Thou utterly reject the children of him whom thy right hand brought from the land of the idolater? Wilt Thou forever hide Thy glory from the tribes whom it led through the burning wilderness? Wilt Thou never raise the broken kingdom of Thy servant Israel? Still we wander in darkness, the tenants of a prison, whose chains we feel at every step; the scoff of the idolater, the captive of the infidel. Have we not abided without king or priest, or ephod or teraphim, "many days"—when are those days to be at an end?

Yet is not the captivity at last about to close? Is not the trumpet at the lip to summon Thy chosen? Are not the broken tribes now awaiting but Thy command to come from the desert, from the dungeon, from the mine, like the light from darkness? I gaze upon the stars and think, countless and glorious as they are, such shall yet be thy multitude and thy splendor, people of the undone! The promise of the King of Kings is fulfilling, and even now, to my withered eyes, to my struggling prayer, to the deeper agonies of a supplication that no tongue can utter, there is a vision and an answer. On the flint, worn by kneeling, I hear the midnight voice; and weeping, wait for the day that will come, tho heaven and earth shall pass away.

CHAPTER XLVI

A Cry of Wo

My first object was to ascertain the fate of my family. From Constantius I could learn nothing, for the severity of his wound had reduced him to such a state that he recognized no one. I sat by him day after day, watching with bitter solicitude for the return of his senses. He raved continually of his wife, and of every other name that I loved. The affecting eloquence of his appeals sometimes plunged me into the deepest depression—sometimes drove me out to seek relief from them, even in the horrors of the streets. I was the most solitary of men. In those melancholy wanderings, none spoke to me; I spoke to none. The kinsmen whom I had left under the command of my brave son were slain or dispersed, and on the night when I saw him warring with his native ardor, the men whom he led to the foot of the rampart were an accidental band, excited by his brilliant intrepidity to choose him at the instant for their captain. In sorrow, indeed, had I entered Jerusalem.

The devastation of the city was enormous during its tumults. The great factions were reduced to two, but in the struggle a large portion of the Temple had been burned. The stately chambers of the priests were dust and embers The cloisters which surrounded the sanctuary were beaten down or left naked to the visitation of the seasons, which now, as by the peculiar wrath of heaven, had assumed a fierce and ominous inclemency. Tremendous bursts of tempest constantly shook the city, and the popular mind was kept in perpetual alarm at the accidents which followed those storms. Fires were frequently caused by the lightning; deluges of rain flooded the streets, and falling on the shattered roofs, increased the misery of their famishing inhabitants; the sudden severity

of winter in the midst of spring added to the sufferings of a people doubly unprovided to encounter it, by its unexpectedness and by their necessary exposure on the battlements and in the field.

Within the walls all bore the look of a grave, and even that grave shaken by some great convulsion of nature. From the battlements the sight was absolute despair. The Roman camps covered the hills, and we could see the soldiery sharpening the very lances that were to drink our blood. The fires of their night-watches lighted up the horizon round. We hourly heard the sound of their trumpets and their shouts, as the sheep in the fold might hear the roaring of the lion and the tiger, ready to leap their feeble boundary. Yet the valor of the people was never wearied out. The vast mound, whose circle was to shut us up from the help of man or the hope of escape, was the grand object of attack and defense; and tho thousands of my countrymen covered the ground at its foot with their corpses, the Jew was still ready to rush on the Roman spear. This valor was spontaneous, for subordination had long been at an end. The names of John of Giscala, and Simon, influential as they were in the earlier periods of the war, had lost their force in the civil fury and desperate pressures of the siege. No leaders were acknowledged but hatred of the enemy, iron fortitude, and a determination not to survive the fall of Jerusalem!

In this furious warfare I took my share with the rest; handled the spear, and fought and watched without thinking of any distinction of rank. My military experience, and the personal strength which enabled me to render prominent services in those desultory attacks, often excited our warriors to offer me the command; but ambition was dead within me.

I was one day sitting beside the bed of Constantius, and bitterly absorbed in gazing on what I thought the progress of death, when I heard a universal outcry, more melancholy than human voices seemed ever made to utter. My first thought was that the enemy had forced the gates. I took my sword down and prepared to go out and die. I found the streets filled with crowds hurrying forward without any apparent

, wo, wo direction, but all exhibiting a sorrow amounting to agony; wringing their hands, beating their bosoms, tearing their hair, and casting dust and ashes on their heads. A large body of the priesthood came rushing from the temple with loud lamentations. The DAILY SACRIFICE had ceased!" The perpetual offering, which, twice a day, burned in testimonial of the sins and the expiation of Israel, the peculiar homage of the nation to Heaven, was no more! The siege had extinguished the resources of the Temple; the victims could no longer be supplied, and the people must perish without the power of atonement! This was the final cutting off—the declaration of the sentence—the seal of the great condemnation. Jerusalem was undone!

Overpowered by this fatal sign, I was sadly returning to my worse than solitary chamber, for there lay, speechless and powerless, the noblest creature that breathed in Jerusalem—when I was driven aside by a new torrent of the people, exclaiming "The prophet! the prophet! wo to the city of David!"

They rushed on in haggard multitudes, and in the midst of them came a maniac bounding and gesticulating with indescribable wildness. His constant exclamation was "Wo! —wo!—wo!" uttered in a tone that searched the very heart. He stopped from time to time, flung out some denunciation against the popular crimes, and then recommenced his cry of "Wo!" and bounded forward again.

He at length came opposite to the spot where I stood, and his features struck me as resembling those I had seen before. But they were full of a strange impulse—the grandeur of inspiration mingled with the animal fierceness of frenzy. The eye shot fire under the sharp and hollow brows; the nostrils contracted and opened like those of an angry steed, and every muscle of a singularly elastic frame was quivering and exposed from the effects alike of mental violence and famine.

"Ho, Prince of Naphtali! we meet at last!" was his instant outcry. His countenance fell, and tears gushed from lids that looked incapable of a human feeling. "I found her," said he, "my beauty, my bride! She was in the dun-

geon. The ring that I tore from that villain's finger was worth a gold-mine, for it opened the gates of her prison. Come forth, girl!" Sabat the Ishmaelite

With these words he caught by the hand and led to me a pale creature, with the traces of loveliness, but evidently in the last stage of mortal decay. She stood silent as a statue. In compassion, I took her hand, while the multitude gathered round us in curiosity. I now remembered Sabat, the Ishmaelite, and his story.

"She is mad," said Sabat, shaking his head mournfully, and gazing on the fading form at his side. "Worlds would not restore her senses. But there is a time for all things." He sighed, and cast his large eyes on heaven. "I watched her day and night," he went on, "until I grew mad too. But the world will have an end, and then—all will be well. Come, wife, we must be going. To-night there are strange things within the walls, and without the walls. There will be feasting and mourning; there will be blood and tears; then comes the famine—then comes the fire—then the sword; and then all is quiet, and forever!"

He paused, wiped away the tears, then began again wilder than ever: "Heaven is mighty! To-night there will be wonders; watch well your walls, people of the ruined city! To-night there will be signs; let no man sleep but those who sleep in the grave. Prince of Naphtali, have you too sworn, as I have, to die?" He lifted his meager hand. "Come, thunders! come, fires! vengeance cries from the sanctuary. Listen, undone people! listen, nation of sorrow! the ministers of wrath are on the wing. Wo!—wo!—wo!"

In pronouncing those words with a voice of the most sonorous yet melancholy power, he threw himself into a succession of strange and fearful gestures; then beckoning to the female, who submissively followed his steps, plunged away among the multitude. I heard the howl of "Wo!—wo!—wo!" long echoed through the windings of the ruined streets, and thought that I heard the voice of the angel of desolation.

CHAPTER XLVII

The Struggle for Supremacy

The Sickness of the Heart

THE seventeenth day of the month Tamuz, ever memorable in the sufferings of Israel, was the last of the Daily Sacrifice. Sorrow and fear were on the city, and the silence of the night was broken by the lamentations of the multitude. I returned to my chamber of affliction, and busied myself in preparing for the guard of the Temple, to withdraw my mind from the gloom that was beginning to master me. Yet when I looked round the room, and thought of what I had been, of the opulent enjoyments of my palace, and of the beloved faces which surrounded me there, I felt the sickness of the heart.

The chilling air that blew through the dilapidated walls, the cruse of water, the scanty bread, the glimmering lamp, the comfortless and squalid bed, on which lay in the last stages of weakness a patriot and a hero—a being full of fine affections and abilities, reduced to the helplessness of an infant, and whom in leaving for the night I might be leaving to perish by the poniard of the robber—unmanned me. I cast the simitar from my hand, and sat down with a sullen determination there to linger until death, or that darker vengeance which haunted me, should do its will.

The night was stormy, and the wind howled in long and bitter gusts through the deserted chambers of the huge mansion. But the mind is the true place of suffering, and I felt the season's visitation in my locks drenched about my face, and my tattered robes swept by the freezing blasts, as only the natural course of things.

I was sitting by the bedside, moistening the fevered lips of Constantius with water, and pressing on him the last fragment of bread which I might ever have to give, when I, with sudden delight, heard him utter for the first time articulate

sounds. I stooped to catch accents so dear and full of hope. But the words were a supplication—he prayed to the Christian's God!

I turned away from this resistless conviction of his belief. But this was no time for debate, and I was won to listen again. His voice was scarcely above a whisper, but his language was the aspiration of the heart. His eyes were closed, and, evidently unconscious of my presence, in his high communion with Heaven, he talked of things of which I had but imperfect knowledge or none; of blood shed for the sins of man; of a descended Spirit to guide the servants of Heaven; of the unspeakable love that gave the Son of God to mortal suffering for the atonement of that human guilt which nothing but such a sacrifice could atone. He finished by the names dear to us both; and praying "for their safety if they still were in life, or for their meeting beyond the grave, declared himself resigned to the will of his Lord."

I waited in sacred awe until I saw, by the subsiding motion of the lips, that the prayer was done, and then, anxious to gain information of my family, questioned him. But with the prayer the interval of mental power had passed away. The veil was drawn over his senses once more, and his answers were unintelligible. Yet even the hope of his restoration lightened my gloom; my spirits, naturally elastic, shook off their leaden weight; I took up the simitar, and pressing the cold hand of my noble fellow victim, prepared to issue forth to the Temple. The storm was partially gone, and the moon, approaching to the full, was high in heaven, fighting her way through masses of rapid cloud. The wind still roared in long blasts, as the tempest retired, like an army repulsed, and indignant at being driven from the spoil. But the ground was deluged, and a bitter sleet shot on our half-naked bodies. I had far to pass through the streets of the upper city, and their aspect was deeply suited to the melancholy of the hour.

Vast walls and buttresses of the burned and overthrown mansions remained, that in the spectral light looked like gigantic specters. Ranges of inferior ruins stretched to the utmost glance; some yet sending up the smoke of recent con-

The Avenues of Death

flagration, and others beaten down by the storms or left to decay. The immense buildings of the hierarchy, once the scene of all but kingly magnificence, stood roofless and windowless, with the light sadly gleaming through their fissures, and the wind singing a dirge of ruin through their halls. I scarcely met a human being, for the sword and famine had fearfully reduced the once countless population.

But I often startled a flight of vultures from their meal; or, in the sinking of the light, stumbled upon a heap that uttered a cry, and showed that life was there; or from his horrid morsel, a wretch glared upon me, as one wolf might glare upon another, that came to rob him of his prey; or the twinkling of a miserable lamp in the corner of a ruin glimmered over a knot of felony and murder, reckoning their hideous gains and carousing with the dagger drawn. Heaps of bones, whitening in the air, were the monuments of the wasted valor of my countrymen, and the oppressive atmosphere gave the sensation of walking in a sepulcher.

I dragged my limbs with increased difficulty through those long avenues of death that, black, silent, and split into a thousand shapes of ruin, looked less like the streets of a city than the rocky defiles of a mountain shattered by lightnings and earthquakes. On the summit of the hill I found a crowd of unhappy beings, who came, like myself, actuated by zeal to defend the Temple from the insults to which its sanctity was now nightly exposed. Faction had long extinguished the native homage of the people. Battles had been fought within its walls, and many a corpse loaded the sacred floors, that once would have required solemn ceremonies to free them from the pollution of an unlicensed step.

And what a band was assembled there! Wretches mutilated by wounds, worn with sleeplessness, haggard with want of food; shivering together on the declivity, whose naked elevation exposed them to the whole inclemency of the night; flung like the dead, on the ground, or gathered in little knots among the ruined porticos, with death in every frame and despair in every heart.

I was sheltering myself behind the broken columns of the

Grand gate, from the bitter wind which searched every fiber, and was sinking into that chilling torpor which benumbs body and mind alike, when a clash of military music and the tramp of a multitude assailed my ear. I started up and found my miserable companions mustered, from the various hollows of the hill, to our post on the central ground of Mount Moriah, whence the view was boundless on every side. A growing blaze rose up from the valley and flashed upon the wall of circumvallation. The sounds of cymbal and trumpet swelled; the light advanced rapidly; and going the circuit of the wall, helmets and lances of the cavalry were seen glittering through the gloom; a crowd of archers preceded a dense body of the legionary horse, at whose head rode a group of officers. On this night the fatal wall had been completed, and Titus was going its round in triumph. Every horseman carried a torch, and strong divisions of infantry followed, bearing lamps and vessels of combustible matter on the points of their spears. As the whole moved, rolling and bending with the inequalities of the ground, I thought that I saw a mighty serpent, coiling his burning spires round the prey that was never to be rescued by the power of man.

But the pomp of war below and the wretchedness round me, raised reflections of such bitterness that when Titus and his splendid troop reached the mountain of the Temple, one outcry of sorrow and anticipated ruin burst from us all. The conqueror heard it, and, from the instant maneuvering of his troops, was evidently alarmed; he had known the courage of the Jews too long not to dread the effect of their despair. And despair it was, fierce and untamable!

I started forward, exclaiming: "If there is a man among you ready to stake his life for his country, let him follow me."

To the last hour the Jew was a warrior! The crowd seized their spears, and we sprang down the cliffs. As we reached the outer wall of the city, I restrained their exhaustless spirit until I had singly ascertained the state of the enemy. Titus was passing the well-known ravine near the fountain-gate, where the ground was difficult for cavalry, from its being

The Roman Charge

chiefly divided into gardens. I flung open the gate, and led the way to the circumvallation. The sentinels, occupied with looking on the pomp, suffered us to approach unperceived; we mounted the wall, overthrew everything before us, and plunged down upon the cavalry, entangled in the ravine. It was a complete surprise.

The bravery of the legions was not proof against the fury of our attack. Even our wild faces and half-naked forms, by the uncertain glare of the torches, looked scarcely human. Horse and man rolled down the declivity. The arrival of fresh troops only increased the confusion; their torches made them a mark for our pikes and arrows; every point told, and every Roman that fell, armed a Jew. The conflict now became murderous, and we stabbed at our ease the troopers of the Emperor's guard, through their mail, while their long lances were useless.

The defile gave us incalculable advantages, for the garden walls were impassable by the cavalry, while we bounded over them like deer. All was uproar, terror, and rage. We actually waded through blood. At every step, I trod on horse or man; helmets and bucklers, lances and armor, lay in heaps, and the stream of the ravine soon ran purple with the proudest gore of the legions.

At length, while we were absolutely oppressed with the multitude of dead, a sudden blast of trumpets and the shouts of the enemy led me to prepare for a still fiercer effort. A tide of cavalry poured over the ground; Titus, a gallant figure, cheering them on, with his helmet in his hand, galloped in their front; I withdrew my wearied followers from the exposed situation into which their success had led them, and posting them behind a rampart of Roman dead, awaited the charge. It came with the force of thunder; the powerful horses of the imperial squadron broke over our rampart at the first shock and bore us down like stubble. Every man of us was under their feet in a moment; and yet the very number of our assailants saved us. The narrowness of the place gave no room for the management of the horse; the darkness assisted both our escape and assault; and even lying on the

ground, we plunged our knives in horse and rider, with terrible retaliation. Salathiel Attacks Ti

The cavalry at length gave way, but the Roman general, a man of the heroic spirit that is only inflamed by repulse, rushed forward among the disheartened troops, and roused them by his cries and gestures to retrieve their honor. After a few bold words, he again charged at their head. I singled him out, as I saw his golden helmet gleam in the torch-light. To capture the son of Vespasian would have been a triumph worth a thousand lives. Titus [46] was celebrated for personal dexterity in the management of the horse and lance, and I could not withhold my admiration of the skill with which he penetrated the difficulties of the field, and the mastery with which he overthrew all that opposed him.

Our motley ranks were already scattering, when I cried out my name and defied him to the combat. He stooped over his charger's neck to discover his adversary, and seeing before him a being as blackened and beggared as the most dismantled figure of the crowd, gave a laugh of fierce derision, and was turning away, when our roar of scorn recalled him. He struck in the spur, and couching his lance, bounded toward me. To have waited his attack must have been destruction; I sprang aside, and with my full vigor flung my javelin; it went through his buckler. He reeled, and a groan rose from the legionaries who were rushing forward to his support. He stopped them with a fierce gesture, and casting off the entangled buckler, charged again. But the hope of the imperial diadem was not to be thus cheaply hazarded. The whole circle of cavalry rolled in upon us; I was dragged down by a hundred hands, and Titus was forced away, indignant at the zeal which had thwarted his fiery valor.

In the confusion I was forgotten, burst through the concourse, and rejoined my countrymen, who had given me over for lost, and now received me with shouts of victory. The universal cry was to advance, but I felt that the limit of triumph for that night was come; the engagement had become known to the whole range of the enemy's camps, and troops without number were already pouring down. I ordered a re-

The Rampart's Illumination

treat, but there was one remaining exploit to make the night's service memorable.

Leaving a few hundred pikemen outside the circumvallation, to keep off any sudden attempt, I set every hand at work to gather the dry weeds, rushes, and fragments of trees from the low grounds into a pile. It was laid against the rampart. I flung the first torch, and pile and rampart were soon alike in a blaze. Volumes of flame, carried by the wind, rolled round its entire circuit. The Romans rushed down in multitudes to extinguish the fire. But this became continually more difficult. Jerusalem had been roused from its sleep, and the extravagant rumors that a great victory was obtained, Titus slain, and the enemy's camp taken by storm, stimulated the natural spirit of the people to the most boundless confidence. Every Jew who could find a lance, an arrow, or a knife hurried to the gates, and the space between the walls and the circumvallation was crowded with an army which, in that crisis of superhuman exultation, perhaps no disciplined force on earth could have outfought.

Nothing could now save the rampart. Torches innumerable, piles of faggots, arms, even the dead, all things that could burn, were flung upon it. Thousands, who at other times might have shrunk, forgot the name of fear, leaped into the very midst of the flames, and tearing up the blazing timbers, dug to the heart of the rampart and filled the hollows with sulfur and bitumen; thousands struggled across the tumbling ruins, to throw themselves among the Roman spearsmen and see the blood of an enemy before they died.

War never had a bolder moment. Human nature, roused to the wildest height of enthusiasm, was lavishing life like dust. The ramparts spread a horrid light upon the havoc; every spot of the battle, every group of the furious living, and the trampled and deformed dead, was keenly visible. The ear was deafened by the incessant roar of flame, the falling of the huge heaps of the rampart, and the agonies and exultations of men, reveling in mutual slaughter.

In that hour came one of those solemn signs that marked

the downfall of Jerusalem. The tempest, that had blown at intervals with tremendous violence, died away at once; and surge of light ascended from the horizon and rolled up rapidly to the zenith. The phenomenon instantly fixed every eye. There was an indefinable sense in the general mind that a sign of power and providence was about to be given. The battle ceased; the outcries were followed by utter silence; the armed ranks stood still, in the very act of rushing on each other; all faces were turned on the heavens.

The light rose pale and quivering like the meteors of a summer evening. But in the zenith, it spread and swelled into a splendor that distinguished it irresistibly from the wonders of earth or air. It swiftly eclipsed every star. The moon vanished before it; the canopy of the sky seemed to be dissolved, for a view into a bright and infinite region beyond, fit for the career of those mighty beings to whom man is but the dust on the gale.

As we gazed, this boundless field was transformed into a field of battle; multitudes seemed to crowd it in the fiercest combat; horsemen charged and died under their horses' feet; armor and standards were trampled in blood; column and line burst through each other. At length the battle stooped toward the earth, and with hearts beating with indescribable feelings we recognized in the fight the banners of the tribes. It was Jew and Roman struggling for life; the very countenances of the combatants became visible, and each man below saw a representative of himself above. The fate of Jewish war was there written by the hand of Heaven; the fate of the individual was there predicted in the individual triumph or fall. What tongue of man can tell the intense interest with which we watched every blow, every movement, every wound, of those images of ourselves?

The light now illumined the whole horizon below. The legions were seen drawn out in front of the camps, ready for action—every helmet and spear-point glittering in the radiance; every face turned up, gazing in awe and terror on the sky. The tents spreading over the hills; the thousands and tens of thousands of auxiliaries and captives; the little groups

A Dreadful Sign

of the peasantry, roused from sleep by the uproar of the night, and gathered upon the knolls and eminences of their fields—all were bathed in a flood of preternatural luster. But the wondrous battle approached its close. The visionary Romans seemed to shake, column and cohort gave way, and the banners of the tribes waved in victory over the celestial field. Then human voices dared to be heard. From the city and the plain burst forth one mighty shout of triumph!

But our presumption was soon to be checked. A peal of thunder that made the very ground tremble under our feet rolled from the four quarters of the heaven. The conquering host shook, broke, and fled in utter confusion over the sapphire field. It was pursued, but by no semblance of the Roman.

An awful enemy was on its steps. Flashes of forked fire, like myriads of lances, darted after it; cloud on cloud deepened down, as the smoke of a mighty furnace; globes of light shot blasting and burning along its track. Then amid the double roar of thunder rushed forth the chivalry of heaven. Shapes of transcendent beauty, yet with looks of wrath that withered the human eye—armed sons of immortality descending on the wing by millions—mingled with shapes and instruments of ruin, for which the mind has no conception. The circle of the heaven was filled with the chariots and horses of fire. Flight was in vain; the weapons were seen to drop from the Jewish host; their warriors sank upon the splendid field. Still the immortal armies poured on, trampling and blasting, until the last of the routed were consumed.

The angry pomp then paused. Countless wings were spread, and the angelic multitudes, having done the work of vengeance, rushed upward, with the sound of ocean in the storm. The roar of trumpets and thunders was heard, until the splendor was lost in the heights of the empyrean.

We felt the terrible warning. Our strength was dried up at the sight; despair seized upon our souls. We had seen the fate of Jerusalem. No victory over man could now save us from the coming of final ruin!

Thousands never left the ground on which they stood; they perished by their own hands, or lay down and died of broken hearts. The rest fled through the night, that again wrapped them in tenfold darkness. The whole multitude scattered with soundless steps, and in silence like an army of specters. Despair

CHAPTER XLVIII

The Sting of a Story

In the Darkness of Night

In the deepest dejection that could overwhelm the human mind, I returned to the city, where one melancholy care still bound me to existence. I hastened to my comfortless shelter, but the battle had fluctuated so far around the walls that I found myself perplexed, among the ruins of a portion of the lower city, a crowd of obscure streets which belonged almost wholly to strangers and the poorer population.

The faction of John of Giscala, composed chiefly of the more profligate and beggared class, had made the lower city their stronghold, before they became masters of Mount Moriah; and some desperate skirmishes, of which conflagrations were the perpetual consequence, laid waste the principal part of a district built and ruined by the haste and carelessness of poverty. To find a guide through this scene of dilapidation was hopeless, for every living creature, terrified by the awful portents of the sky, had fled from the streets. The night was solid darkness. No expiring gleam from the burned rampart, no fires of the Roman camps, no torch on the Jewish battlements, broke the pitchy blackness. Life and light seemed to have perished together.

To proceed soon became impossible, and I had no other resource than to wait the coming of day. But to one accustomed as I was to hardships, this inconvenience was trivial. I felt my way along the walls, to the entrance of a house that promised some protection from the night, and flinging myself into a corner, vainly tried to slumber. But the rising of the storm and the rain pouring upon my lair drove me to seek a more sheltered spot within the ruin. The destruction was so effectual that this was difficult to discover, and I was hopelessly returning to take my chance in the open air when I

observed the glimmer of a lamp through a crevice in the upper part of the building. My first impulse was to approach and obtain assistance. But the abruptness of the ascent gave me time to consider the hazard of breaking in upon such groups as might be gathered at that hour, in a period when every atrocity under heaven reigned in Jerusalem. A Sudden Reunion

My patience was put to but brief trial, for in a few minutes I heard a low hymn. It paused, as if followed by prayer. The hymn began again, in accents so faint as evidently to express the fear of the worshipers. But the sounds thrilled through my soul. I listened, in a struggle of doubt and hope. Could I be deceived? and if I were, how bitter must be the discovery. I sat down at the foot of the rude stair, to feed myself with the fancied delight before it should be snatched from me forever.

But my perturbation would have risen to madness had I stopped longer. I climbed up the tottering steps; half-way I found myself obstructed by a door; I struck upon it, and called aloud. After an interval of miserable delay, a still higher door was opened, and a figure enveloped in a veil timidly looked out and asked my purpose. I saw, glancing over her, two faces that I would have given the world to see. I called out "Miriam!" Overpowered with emotion, my speech failed me. I lived only in my eyes. I saw Miriam fling off the mantle with a scream of joy, and rush down the steps. I saw my two daughters follow her with the speed of love; the door was thrown open, and I fell fainting into their arms.

Tears, exclamations, and gazings were long our only language. My wife hung over my wasted frame with endless embraces and sobs of joy. My daughters fell at my feet, bathed my cold hands with their tears, smiled on me in speechless delight, and then wept again. They had thought me lost to them forever. I had thought them dead, or driven to some solitude which forbade us to meet again on this side of the grave. For two years, two dreadful years, a lonely man on earth, a wifeless husband, a childless father, tried by every misery of mind and body; here—here I

The Terror of a Memory

found my treasure once more! On this spot, wretched and destitute as it was, in the midst of public misery and personal wo, I had found those whose loss would have made the riches of mankind, beggary to me. My soul overflowed. Words were not made to tell the feverish fondness, the strong delight that quivered through me. I wept with woman's weakness; I held my wife and children at arm's length, that I might enjoy the full happiness of gazing on them; then my eyes grew dim, and I caught them to my heart, and in silence, the silence of unspeakable emotion, tried to collect my thoughts and to convince myself that my joy was no dream.

The night passed in mutual inquiries. The career of my family had been deeply diversified. On my capture in the great battle with Cestius, in which it was said that I had fallen, they were on the point of coming to Jerusalem to ascertain their misfortune. The advance of the Romans to Masada precluded this. They sailed for Alexandria, and were overtaken by a storm.

"In that storm," said Miriam, with terror painted on her countenance, "we saw a sight that appalled the firmest heart among us, and which to this hour recalls fearful images. The night had fallen intensely dark. Our vessel, laboring through the tempest during the day and greatly shattered, was expected to go down before morn, and I had come upon the deck, prepared to submit to the general fate, when I saw a flame in the distance, and pointed it out to the mariners; but they were paralyzed by weariness and fear, and instead of approaching what I conceived to be a beacon, they left the vessel to the mercy of the wind. I watched the light; to my astonishment, I saw it advancing over the waves. It was a large ship on fire, and rushing down upon us. Then, indeed, there was no insensibility among our mariners; they were like madmen, through excess of fear—they did everything but make an effort to escape the danger.

"The blazing ship came toward us with terrific rapidity. As it approached, the figure of a man was seen on the deck, standing unhurt, in the midst of the burning. The Syrian

pilot, hitherto the boldest of our crew, at this sight cast the helm from his hands in despair, and tore his beard, exclaiming that we were undone. To our questions, he would give no other answer than by pointing to the solitary being who stood calmly in the center of the conflagration, more like a demon than a man.

"I proposed that we should make some effort to rescue this unfortunate man. But the pilot, horror-struck at the thought, then gave up the tale that it cost him agonies even to utter. He told us that the being whom our frantic compassion would attempt to save, was an accursed thing; that for some crime, too inexpiable to allow of his remaining among creatures capable of hope, he was cast out from men, stricken into the nature of the condemned spirits, and sentenced to rove the ocean in fire, ever burning and never consumed!"

I felt every word, as if that fire was devouring my flesh. The sense of what I was, and what I must be, was poison. My head swam; mortal pain overwhelmed me. And this abhorred thing I was; this sentenced and fearful wretch I was, covered with wrath and shame; this exile from human nature I was; and I heard my sentence pronounced and my existence declared hideous by the lips on which I hung for confidence and consolation against the world.

Flinging my robe over my face to hide its writhings, I seemed to listen, but my ears refused to hear. In my perturbation, I once thought of boldly avowing the truth, and thus freeing myself from the pang of perpetual concealment. But the offense and the retribution were too real and too deadly to be disclosed, without destroying the last chance of happiness to those innocent sufferers. I mastered the convulsion, and again bent my ear.

"Our story exhausts you," said Miriam; "but it is done. After a long pursuit, in which the burning ship followed us as if with the express purpose of our ruin, we were snatched from a death by fire, only to undergo the chance of one by the waves, for we were sinking. Yet it may have been owing even to that chase that we were saved. The ship had driven us toward land. At sea we must have perished, but the shore

A Cry of Recognition

was found to be so near, that the country people, guided by the flame, saved us, without the loss of a life. Once on shore, we met with some of the fugitives from Masada, who brought us to Jerusalem, the only remaining refuge for our unhappy nation."

To prevent a recurrence of this torturing subject, I mastered my emotion so far as to ask some question of the siege. But Miriam's thoughts were still busy with the sea. After some hesitation, and as if she dreaded the answer, she said:

"One extraordinary circumstance made me take a strong interest in the fate of that solitary being on board the burning vessel. It once seemed to have the most striking likeness to you. I even cried out to it under that impression, but fortunate it was for us all that my heedless cry was not answered, for when it approached us I could see its countenance change; it threw a sheet of flame across our vessel that almost scorched us; and then perhaps thinking that our destruction was complete, the human fiend ascended from the waters in a pillar of intense fire."

I felt deep pain at this romantic narrative. My mysterious sentence was the common talk of mankind. My frightful secret, that I had thought locked up in my own heart, was loose as the air. This was enough to make life bitter. But to be identified in the minds of my family with the object of universal horror, was a chance which I determined not to contemplate. My secret there was still safe; and my resolution became fixed, never to destroy that safety by any frantic confidence of my own.

CHAPTER XLIX

Salathiel's Strange Quarters

WHILE, with my head bent on my knees, I hung in the misery of self-abhorrence, I heard the name of Constantius sorrowfully pronounced beside me. The state in which he must be left by my long absence flashed upon my mind; I raised my eyes, and saw Salome. It was her voice that sounded, and I then first observed the work of wo in her form and features. She was almost a shadow; her eye was lusterless, and the hands that she clasped in silent prayer were reduced to the bone. But before I could speak, Miriam made a sign of silence to me, and led the mourner away; then returning, said: The fate of Constantius

"I dreaded lest you might make any inquiries before Salome, for her husband. Religion alone has kept her from the grave. On our arrival here, we found our noble Constantius worn out by the fatigue of the time, but he was our guardian spirit in the dreadful tumults of the city. When we were burned out of one asylum, he led us to another. It is but a week since he placed us in this melancholy spot, but yet the more secure and unknown. He himself brought us provisions, supplied us with every comfort that could be obtained by his impoverished means, and saved us from famine. But now,"—the tears filled her eyes and she could not proceed.

"Yes—now," said I, "he is a sight that would shock the eye; we must keep Salome in ignorance as long as we can."

"The unhappy girl knows his fate but too well. He left us a few days since, to obtain some intelligence of the siege. We sat, during the night, listening to the frightful sounds of battle. At daybreak, unable any longer to bear the suspense or sit looking at Salome's wretchedness, I ventured to the

A False Report

fountain-gate, and there heard what I so bitterly anticipated —our brave Constantius was slain!"

She wept aloud, and sobs and cries of irrepressible anguish answered her from the chamber of my unhappy child.

The danger of a too sudden discovery prevented me from drying those tears, and I could proceed only by offering conjectures on the various chances of battle, the possibility of his being made prisoner, and the general difficulty of ascertaining the fates of men in the irregular combats of a populace. But Salome sat fixed in cold incredulity. Esther sorrowfully kissed my hand, for my disposition to give them a ray of comfort; Miriam gazed on me with a sad and searching look, as if she felt that I would not tamper with their distresses, yet she was deeply perplexed for the issue. At last the delay grew painful to myself, and taking Salome to my arms, and pressing a kiss of parental love on her pale cheek, I whispered, "He lives!"

I was overwhelmed with transports and thanksgivings. Precaution was at an end. If battle had been raging in the streets, I could not now have restrained the generous impatience of friendship and love. We left the mansion. There was not much to leave besides the walls; but such as it was, the first fugitive was welcome to the possession. Night was still within the building, which had belonged to some of the Roman officers of state, and was massive and of great extent. But at the threshold the gray dawn came quivering over the Mount of Olives.

We struggled through the long and winding streets, which even in the light were nearly impassable. From the inhabitants we met with no impediment; a few haggard and fierce-looking men stared at us from the ruins," but we, wrapped up in rude mantles and hurrying along, wore too much the livery of despair to be disturbed by our fellows in wretchedness. With a trembling heart I led the way to the chamber, where lay one in whose life our general happiness was centered. Fearful of the shock which our sudden appearance might give his enfeebled frame, and not less of the misery with which he must be seen, I advanced alone to the bedside. He gave no

sign of recognition, tho he was evidently awake, and I was about to close the curtains and keep, at least, Salome from the hazardous sight of this living ruin, when I found her beside me. She took his hand and sat down on the bed, with her eyes fixed on his hollow features. She spoke not a word, but sat cherishing the wasted hand in her own and kissing it with sad fondness. Her grief was too sacred for our interference, and in sorrow scarcely less poignant than her own, I led apart Miriam and Esther, who, like me, believed that the parting day was come.

Such rude help as could be found in medicine—at a time when our men of science had fled the city, and a few herbs were the only resource—had not been neglected even in my distraction. But life seemed retiring hour by hour, and if I dared to contemplate the death of this beloved being, it was almost with a wish that it had happened before the arrival of those to whom it must be a renewal of agony.

Still, the minor cares, which make so humble yet so necessary a page in the history of life, were to occupy me. Food must be provided for the increased number of my inmates, and where was that to be found in the circle of a beleaguered city? Money was useless, even if I possessed it; the friends who would once have shared their last meal with me were exiled or slain, and it was in the midst of a fierce populace, themselves dying of hunger, that I was to glean the daily subsistence of my wife and children. The natural pride of the chieftain revolted at the idea of supplicating for food, but this was one of the questions that show the absurdity of pride, and I must beg if I would not see them die.

The dwelling had belonged to one of the noble families extinguished, or driven away, in the first commotions of the war. The factions which perpetually tore each other, and fought from house to house, had stripped its lofty halls of everything that could be plundered in the hurry of civil feud, and when I took refuge under its roof it looked the very palace of desolation. But it was a shelter, undisturbed by the riots of the crowd, too bare to invite the robber; and even in its vast and naked chambers, its gloomy passages and frowning

The Palace of the Winds

casements, congenial to the mood of my mind. With Constantius insensible and dying before me, and with my own spirit darkened by an eternal cloud, I loved loneliness and darkness. When the echo of the winds came round me, as I sat during my miserable midnights, watching the countenance of my son, and moistening his feverish lip with the water that even then was becoming a commodity of rare price in Jerusalem, I had communed with memories that I would not have exchanged for the brightest enjoyments of life. I welcomed the sad music, in which the beloved voices revisited my soul; what was earth now to me but a tomb? Pomp—nay, comfort—would have been a mockery. I clung to the solitude and obscurity that gave me the picture of the grave.

But the presence of my family made me feel the wretchedness of my abode. When I cast my eyes round the squalid and chilling halls, and saw wandering through them those gentle and delicate forms, and saw them trying to disguise, by smiles and cheering words, the depression that the whole scene must inspire, I felt a pang that might defy a firmer philosophy than mine—the despair that finds its only relief in scorn.

"Here," said I to Miriam, as I hastened to the door, "I leave you mistress of a palace. The Asmonean blood once flourished within these walls; and why not we? I have seen the nobles of the land crowded into these chambers. They are not so full now, but we must make the most of what we have. Those hangings, that I remember, the pride of the Sidonian who sold them, are left to us still; if they are in fragments, they will but show our handiwork the more. We must make our own music; and in default of menials, serve with our own hands. The pile in that corner was once a throne sent by a Persian king to the descendant of the Maccabee; it will serve us at least for firing. The walls are thick; the roof may hold out a few storms more; the casements, if they keep out nothing else, keep out the daylight, an unwelcome guest, which would do anything but reconcile us to the state of the mansion, and now, farewell for a few hours."

Miriam caught my arm, and said, in that sweet tone which always sank into my heart:

"Salathiel, you must not leave us in this temper. I would rather hear your open complaints of fortune than this affectation of contempt for your calamities. They are many and painful, I allow, tho I will not, dare not, repine. They may even be such as are beyond human cure, but who shall say that he has deserved better—or if he has, that suffering may not be the determined means of exalting his nature? Is gold the only thing that is to be tried in the fire?"

She waited my answer with a look of dejected love.

"Miriam, I need not say that I respect and honor your feelings, but no resignation can combat the substantial evils of life. Will the finest sentiments that ever came from human lips make this darkness light, turn this bitter wind into warmth, or make these hideous chambers but the dungeon?"

"My husband, I dread this language," was the answer, with more than usual solemnity; "it is—must I say it?—even unwise. Shall the creatures of the Power by whom we are placed in life either defy His wrath or disregard His mercy? Might we not be more severely tasked than we are? Are there not thousands at this hour in the world who, with at least equal claims to the divine benevolence (I tremble when I use the presumptuous phrase), are undergoing calamities to which ours are happiness? Look from this very threshold; are there not thousands within the walls of Jerusalem, groaning in the pangs of unhealed wounds, mad, starving, stripped of every succor of man, dying in hovels, the last survivors of their wretched race? and yet we, still enjoying health, with a roof over our heads, with our children round us safe, when the plague of the first-born has fallen upon almost every house in Judea, can complain! Be comforted, my love; I see but one actual calamity among us; and if Constantius should survive, even that one would be at an end."

I left my gentle despot, and hurried through the echoing halls of this palace of the winds. As I approached the great avenues leading from the gates to the Temple, unusual sounds struck my ears. Hitherto nothing in the sadness of the besieged city was sadder than its silence. Death was lord of Jerusalem, and the numberless ways in which life was ex-

Gathering at Jerusalem

tinguished had left but the remnant of its once proud and flourishing population.

But now shouts, and still more, the deep and perpetual murmur that bespeaks the movements and gatherings of a crowded city, astonished me. My first conception was that the enemy had advanced in force, and I was turning toward the battlements to witness, or repel the general fate, when I was involved in the multitude whose voices had perplexed me.

It was the season of the Passover. The Roman barrier had hitherto kept back the tribes; but the victory that left it in embers opened the gates; and from the most death-like solitude, we were once more to see the sons of Judea filling the courts of the city of cities.

CHAPTER L

After the Struggle

NOTHING could be more unrestrained than the public rejoicing. The bold myriads that soon poured in, hour by hour, many of them long acquainted with Roman battle and distinguished for the successful defense of their strongholds, many of them even bearing arms taken from the enemy, or displaying honorable scars, seemed to have come, sent by Heaven. The enemy, evidently disheartened by their late losses and the destruction of the rampart which had cost them so much labor, remained collected in their camps, and access was free from every quarter. The rumors of our triumph had spread with singular rapidity through the land, and even the fearful phenomenon that wrote our undoing in the skies stimulated the national hope. No son of Abraham could believe, without the strongest repugnance, that Heaven had interposed, and yet interposed against the chosen people.

The Living Torrent

A living torrent had come, swelling into the gates, and the great avenues and public places were quickly impassable with the multitude. Jerusalem never before contained so vast a mass of population. Wherever the eye turned were tents, fires, and feasting; still the multitude wore an aspect not such as in former days. The war had made its impression on the inmost spirit of our country. The shepherds and tillers of the ground had been forced into the habits of soldiership, and I saw before me, for the gentle and joyous inhabitants of the field and garden, bands of warriors made fierce by the sullen necessities of the time.

The ruin in which they found Jerusalem increased their gloom. Groups were seen everywhere climbing among the fallen buildings to find out the dwelling of some chief of their tribe, and venting furious indignation on the hands that had

Gloom and Festivity

overthrown it. The work of war upon the famous defenses of the city was a profanation in their eyes. Crowds rushed through the plain to trace the spot where their kindred fell and gather their bones to the tardy sepulcher. Others rushed exultingly over the wrecks of the Roman soldiery, burning them in heaps, that they might not mix with the honored dead.

But it was the dilapidation of the Temple that struck them with the deepest emotion. The singularly nervous sensibility and unequaled native reverence of the Jew were fully awakened by the sight of the humiliated sanctuary. They knelt and kissed the pavements, stained with the marks of civil feud. They sent forth deep lamentations for the dismantled beauty of gate and altar. They wrapped their mantles round their heads, and, covering themselves with dust and ashes, chanted hymns of funereal sorrow over the ruins. Hundreds lay embracing pillar and threshold as they would the corpse of a parent or a child; or, starting from the ground, gathered on the heights nearest to the enemy and poured out curses upon the "Abomination of desolation"—the idolatrous banner that flaunted over the Roman camps, and by its mere presence polluted the Temple of their fathers.

In the midst of this sorrow—and never was there more real sorrow—was the strange contrast of an extravagant spirit of festivity. The Passover, the grand celebration of our law, had been until now marked by a grave homage. Even its recollections of triumphant deliverance and illustrious promise were but slightly suffered to mitigate the general awe. But the character of the Jew had undergone a signal change. Desperate valor and haughty contempt of all power but that of arms were the impulse of the time. The habits of the camp were transferred to every part of life, and the reckless joy of the soldier when the battle is done, the eagerness of the multitude of the dissolute for immediate indulgence, and the rude and unhallowed resources to while away the heavy hour of idleness, were powerfully and repulsively prominent in this final coming-up of the nation.

As I struggled through the avenues in search of the rem-

nant of my tribe, my ears were perpetually startled by sounds of riot. I saw, beside the spot where relations were weeping over their dead, crowds drinking, dancing, and clamoring. Songs of wild exultation were mingled with the laments for their country; wine flowed, and the board, loaded with careless profusion, was surrounded by revelers, with whom the carouse was invariably succeeded by the quarrel. The pharisee and scribe, the pests of society, were once more as busy as ever, bustling through the concourse with supercilious dignity, canvassing for hearers in the market-places as of old, offering up their wordy devotions where they might best be seen, and quarreling with the native bitterness of religious faction. Blind guides of the blind, vipers and hypocrites, I think that I see them still, with their turbans pulled down over their scowling brows; their mantles gathered round them, that they might not be degraded by a profane touch; and every feature of their acrid and worldly physiognomies wrinkled with pride, put to the torture by the assumption of humility. The Varied Scene

Minstrels, far unlike those who once led the way with sacred song to the gates of the holy city, now flocked round the tents, and companies of Greek and Syrian mimes, dancers, and flute-players, the natural and fatal growth of a period of military relaxation, were erecting their pavilions as in the festivals of their own profligate cities.

Deepening the shadows of this fearful profanation, stood forth the traders in terror: the exorcist, the soothsayer, the magician girdled with live serpents, the pretended prophet, naked and pouring out furious rhapsodies; impostors of every color and pursuit, yet some of those abhorred and frightful beings probably the dupes of their own imposture; some utterly frenzied; and some declaring, and doing, wonders that showed a power of evil never learned from man.

In depression of heart I gave up the effort to urge my way through scenes that, firm as I was, terrified me, and turned toward my home through the steep path that passed along the outer court of the Temple. There all wore the mournful silence suited to the sanctuary that was to see its altars kin-

The Sanhedrin Acts

dled no more. But the ruins were crowded with kneeling and wo-begone worshipers, who, from morning until night, clung to the sacred soil and wept for the departing majesty of Judah. I now knelt with them and mingled my tears with theirs.

Prayer calmed my spirit, and before I left the height I stopped to look again upon the wondrous expanse below. The clear atmosphere of the East singularly diminishes distance, and I seemed to stand close by the Roman camps. The valley at my feet was living with the new population of Jerusalem, clustering thick as bees, and sending up the perpetual hum of their mighty hive. The sight was superb, and I involuntarily exulted in the strength that my country was still able to display in the face of her enemies.

Here were the elements of mutual havoc, but might they not be the elements of preservation? The thought occurred that now might be the time to make an effort for peace. We had, by the repulse of the legionaries, shown them the price which they must pay for conquest. Even since that repulse, a new national force had started forward, armed with an enthusiasm that would perish only with the last man, and increasing tenfold the difficulties of the war.

I turned again to the ruins, where I joined some venerable and influential men, who alike shuddered at the excesses of the crowd below and the catastrophe that prolonged war must bring. My advice produced an impression. The remnant of the Sanhedrin were speedily collected, and my proposal was adopted that a deputation should immediately be sent to Titus to ascertain how far he was disposed to an armistice. The regular pacification might then follow with a more solemn ceremonial.

From the top of Mount Moriah we anxiously watched the passage of our envoys through the multitude that wandered over the space from Jerusalem to the foot of the enemy's position. We saw them pass unmolested and enter the Roman lines, and from the group of officers of rank who came forward to meet them we gladly conjectured that their reception was favorable. Within an hour we saw them moving down the side of the hill on their return, and at some

distance behind, a cluster of horsemen slowly advancing. The deputation had executed its task with success. It was received by Titus with Italian urbanity.[48] To its representations of the power subsisting in Judea to sustain the war he fully assented, and giving high praise to the fortitude of the people, only lamented the necessary havoc of war. To give the stronger proof of his wish for peace, his answer was to be conveyed formally by a mission of his chief councilors and officers to the Sanhedrin. Titus Receives Jewish Env

The tidings were soon propagated among the people, and proud of their strength, and irritated against the invader as they were, the prospect of relief from their innumerable privations was welcomed with undisguised joy. The hope was as cheering to the two prominent leaders of the factions as to any man among us. John of Giscala had been stimulated into daring by circumstances alone; nature never intended him for a warrior. Wily, grasping, and selfish, cruel without personal boldness, and keen without intellectual vigor, his only purpose was to accumulate money and to enjoy power. The loftier objects of public life were beyond his narrow capacity. He had been rapidly losing even his own objects; his followers were deserting him, and a continuance of the war involved equally the personal peril which he feared, and the fall of that tottering authority whose loss would leave him to insulted justice.

Simon, the son of Gioras, was altogether of a higher class of mankind. He was by nature a soldier, and, in other times, might have risen to a place among the celebrated names of war. But the fierceness of the period inflamed his spirit into savage atrocity. In the tumults of the city he had distinguished himself by that unhesitating hardihood which values neither its own life nor the lives of others, and his daring threw the hollow and artificial character of his rival deeply into the shade. But he found a different adversary in the Roman. His brute bravery was met by intelligent valor; his rashness was baffled by the discipline of the legions; and weary of conflicts in which he was sure to be defeated, he had long left the field to the irregular sallies of the tribes, and contented him-

The Meaning of Peace

self with prowess in city feud and the preservation of his authority against the dagger.

Peace with Rome would thus have relieved both John and Simon from the danger which threatened to overwhelm them alike; to the citizens it would have given an instant change from the terrors of assault to tranquillity; and to the nation, the hope of an existence made splendidly secure by its having been won from the master of the world.

CHAPTER LI

A Man of Mystery

An Intrud

THE movement of the Roman mission through the plain was marked by loud shouts. As it approached the gates, our little council descended from the temple porch to meet it, where one of the open places in the center of the city was appointed for the conference. The applauding roar of the people followed the troops through the streets, and when the tribunes and senators entered the square, and gave us the right hand of amity, universal acclamation shook the air. A gleam of joy revisited my heart, and I was on the point of ascending an elevation in the center, to announce the terms of this fortunate armistice, when to my astonishment I saw the spot preoccupied.

Whence came the intruder no one could tell, but there he stood, a figure that fixed the universal eye. He was of gigantic stature, brown as an Indian, and thin as one worn to the last extremity by disease or famine. Conjecture was busy. He seemed alternately the fugitive from a dungeon—one of the half-savage recluses that sometimes came from their dens in the wilderness, to exhibit among us the last humiliation of mind and body—a dealer in forbidden arts, attempting to impose on the credulity of the populace, and a prophet armed with the fearful knowledge of our approaching fall. To me there was an expression in his countenance that partook of all; yet there was a something different from all in the glaring eye, the livid scorn of the lip, and the wild and yet grand outline of features which appeared alike overflowing with malignity and majesty.

No man thought of interrupting him. A powerful interest hushed every voice of the multitude, and the only impulse was eagerness to hear the lofty wisdom or the fatal tidings

The Tempest of a Soul

that must be deposited with such a being. He himself seemed to be overwhelmed with the magnitude of the thoughts that he was commissioned to disclose. He stood for a while with the look of one oppressed by a fearful dream, his bosom heaving, his teeth gnashing, every muscle of his meager frame swelling and quivering. He clasped his bony arms across his breast, as if to repress the agitation that impeded his words; he stamped on the ground, in apparent wrath at the faculties which thus sank under him at the important moment; at last the tempest of his soul broke forth:

"Judah! thou wert as a lion—thou wert as the king of the forest, when he went up to the mountains to slay, and from the mountains came down to devour. Thou wert as the garden of Eden; every precious stone was thy covering; the sardine, the topaz, and the beryl were thy pavements; thy fountains were of silver, and thy daughters who walked in thy groves were as the cherubim and the seraphim.

"Judah! thy temple was glorious as the sun-rising, and thy priests were the wise of the earth. Kings came against thee, and their bones were an offering; the fowls of the air devoured them; the foxes brought their young, and feasted them upon the mighty.

"Judah! thou wert as a fire in the midst of the nations—a fire upon an altar; who shall quench thee? A sword over the neck of the heathen; who shall say unto thee, Smite no more! Thou wert as the thunder and the lightning; thou camest from thy place, and the earth was dark. Thou didst thunder, and the nations shook, and the fire of thy indignation consumed them."

The voice in which this extraordinary being uttered those words was like the thunder. The multitude listened with breathless awe. The appeal was to them a renewal of the times of inspiration, and they awaited with outstretched hands and quivering countenances the sentence that their passions interpreted into the will of Heaven.

The figure lifted up his glance, which had hitherto been fixed on the ground; and whether it was the work of fancy or reality, I thought that the glance threw an actual beam of fire

across the upturned visages of the myriads that filled every spot on which a foot could rest—roof, wall, and ground.

Bowing his head, and raising his hands in the most solemn adoration toward the Temple, he pursued, in a voice scarcely above a whisper, yet indescribably impressive:

"Sons of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob! people elect and holy! will you suffer that house of holiness to be the scoff of the idolater? Will you see the polluted sacrifice laid upon its altars? Will you be slaves in the presence of the house of David?"

A rising outcry of the multitude showed how deeply they felt his words. A fierce smile lightened across his features at the sound. He erected his colossal form, and cried out like the roar of a whirlwind:

"Then, men of Judah! be strong, and follow the hand that led you through the sea and through the desert. Is that hand shortened that it can not save? Break off this accursed league with the sons of Belial. Fly every man to arms, for the glory of the mighty people. Go, and let the sword that smote the Canaanite smite the Roman."

He was answered with furious exultation. Swords and poniards were brandished in the air. The safety of the Roman officers became endangered, and I, with some of the elders, dreading a result which must throw fatal obstacles in the way of pacification, attempted to control the popular violence by reason and entreaty. But the spirit of the Romans, haughty with conquest and long contempt of the multitude, disdained to take precautions with a mob, and they awaited with palpable contempt the subsiding of this city effervescence. This silent scorn, which probably stung the deeper for its silence, was retorted to by clamors of unequivocal rage. The mysterious disturber saw the storm coming, and flinging a furious gesture toward the Roman camps, which lay glittering in the sunshine along the hills, he rushed into the loftiest language of malediction.

"Take up a lament for the Roman," he shouted. "He comes like a leviathan; he troubleth the waters with his presence, and the rivers behold him and are afraid.

The Prophecy of Doom

"Thus saith the king, He who holdeth Israel in the hollow of His hand: I will spread My net over thee, and My people shall drag thee upon the shore; I will leave thee to rot upon the land; I will fill the beasts of the earth with thee, until they shall come and find thee, dry bones and dust—even thy glory turned into a taint and a scorn.

"Lift up a cry over Rome and say, Thou art the leopard; thy jaws are red with blood, and thy claws are heavy because of the multitude of the slain; thy spots are glorious, and thy feet are like wings for swiftness. But thy time is at hand. My arrow shall smite through thee; My sword shall go through thee; I will lay thy flesh upon the hills; thy blood shall be red in the rivers; the pits shall be full of thee.

"For thus saith the king: I have not forsaken My children. For My pleasure I have given them over for a while to the hands of the oppressor; but they have loved Me—they have come before Me, and offered up sacrifices; and shall I desert the land of the chosen, the sons of the glorious, My people Israel!"

A universal outcry of wrath and triumph followed this allusion to the national vengeance.

"Ho!" exclaimed the figure. "Men of Israel, hear the words of wisdom. The burden of Rome. By the swords of the mighty will I cause her multitude to fall; the terrible and the strong shall be on thee, city of the idolater; they shall hew off thy cuirasses as the hewer of wood, and of thy shields they shall make vessels of water. There shall be fire in thy palaces, and the sword. Thy sons and thy daughters shall they consume, and thy precious things shall be a spoil when the king shall give the sign from the sanctuary."

He paused, and, lifting up his fleshless arm, stood like a giant bronze pointing to the Temple.

To the utter astonishment of all, a vapor was seen to ascend from the summit of Mount Moriah, wreathing and white like the smoke that used to mark the daily sacrifice. Our first conception was that this great rite was resumed, and the shout of joy was on our lips. But the vapor had scarcely parted from the crown of the hill when it blackened

and began to whirl with extraordinary rapidity; it thenceforth A wind p
less ascended than shot up, perpetually darkening and distending. The horizon grew dim; the cloudy canopy above continued to spread and revolve; lightning began to quiver through, and we heard, at intervals, low peals of thunder. But no rain fell, and the wind was lifeless. Nothing could be more complete than the calm; not a hair of our heads was moved, yet the heart of the countless multitude was penetrated with the dread of some impending catastrophe that restrained every voice, and the silence itself was awful.

In the climate of Judea we were accustomed to the rapid rise and violent devastations of tempests. But the rising of this storm, so closely connected with the appearance of the strange summoner that it almost followed his command, invested a phenomenon, at all times fearful, with a character that might have struck firmer minds than those of the enthusiasts round him. To heighten the wonder, the progress of the storm still seemed faithful to the command. Wherever this man of mystery waved his arm, there rushed a sheet of cloud. The bluest tract of heaven was as black as night, at the moment when he turned his ominous presence toward it, until there was no more sky to be obliterated, and but for the fiery streaks that tore through, we should have stood under a canopy of solid gloom.

At length the whirlwind, that we had seen driving and rolling the clouds like billows, burst upon us, scattering fragments of the buildings far and wide, and cutting a broad way through the overthrown multitude. Then superstition and terror were loud-mouthed. The populace, crushed and dashed down, exclaimed that a volcano was throwing up flame from the mount of the Temple; that sulfurous smokes were rising through the crevices of the ground; that the rocking of an earthquake was felt; and still more terrible, that beings, not to be looked on, nor even to be named, were hovering round them in the storm.

The general rush of the people, in which hundreds were trampled and in which nothing but the most violent efforts could keep any on their feet, bore me away for a while. The

Beginnings Vengeance

struggle was sufficient to absorb all my senses, for nothing could be more perilous. The darkness was intense, the peals of the storm were deafening, and the howlings and fury of the crowd, trampling and being trampled on, and fighting for life in blindness and despair, with hand, foot, and dagger, made an uproar louder than that of the storm. In this conflict, rather of demons than of men, I was whirled away in eddy after eddy, until chance brought me again to the foot of the elevation.

There I beheld a new wonder. A column of livid fire stood upon it, reaching to the clouds. I could discern the outline of a human form within. But while I expected to see it drop dead or blasted to a cinder, the flame spread over the ground, and I saw its strange inhabitant making signs like those of incantation. He drew a circle upon the burning soil, poured out some unguent which diffused a powerful and rich odor, razed the skin of his arm with a dagger, and let fall some drops of blood into the blaze.

I shuddered at the sight of those palpable appeals to the power of Evil, but I was pressed upon by thousands, and retreat was impossible. The strange being then, with a ghastly smile of triumph, waved the weapon toward the Roman camps.

"Behold," he cried, "the beginnings of vengeance!"

A thunder-roll that almost split the ear echoed round the hills. The darkness passed away with it. Above Jerusalem the sky cleared, and cleared into a translucence and blue splendor unrivaled by the brightest sunshine. The people, wrought up to the highest expectancy, shouted at this promise of a prouder deliverance, and exclaiming, "Goshen! Goshen!" looked breathlessly for the completion of the plague upon the more than Egyptian oppressor. They were not held long in suspense.

The storm had cleared away above our heads, only to gather in deeper terrors round the circle of hills on which we could see the enemy in the most overwhelming state of alarm. The clouds rushed on, ridge over ridge, until the whole horizon seemed shut in by a wall of night towering to the skies. I

heard the deep voice of the orator; at the utterance of some strange words, a gleam played round his dagger's point, and the wall of darkness was instantly a wall of fire. The storm was let loose in its rage. While we stood in daylight and in perfect calm, the lightning poured like sheets of rain or gushes of burning metal from a furnace upon the enemy. The vast circuit of the camps was instantly one blaze. The wind tore everything before it with irresistible violence. We saw the tents swept off the ground and driven far over the hills in flames like meteors; the piles of arms and banners blown away; the soldiery clinging to the rocks, flying together in helpless crowds, or scattering, like maniacs, with hair and garments on fire; the baggage and military machines, the turrets and ramparts, sinking in flames; the beasts of burden plunging and rushing through the lines, or lying in smoldering heaps where the lightning first smote them. All was conflagration!

CHAPTER LII

The Prophecy of Evil

The Roman Embassy vows indignant

THE Roman embassy had hitherto remained in stern composure. The visitations of nature they were accustomed to sustain; the perturbations of a Jewish mob were beneath the notice of the universal conquerors. But the sight of the havoc among their countrymen shook their stoicism, and the cavalry that formed the escort burst into indignant murmurs at the exultation of the multitude, until the commander of the troop, whose arms and bearing showed him to be of the highest rank, unable to restrain his feelings, spurred to the front of the embarrassed mission.

"How long, senators," exclaimed he, "shall we stand here to be scoffed at by these wretches? The imperial guard feels itself disgraced by such a service. Will you have the squadron openly mutiny? If they should ride away and leave us to ourselves, who could blame them? What will the noble Titus say, when we return to tell him that we stood by and listened to the taunts of those cooped-up slaves, on him, the army, and Rome? But how long shall we be suffered even to listen? Linger here, and before the day is out your lives will be at the mercy of those assassins. And by the immortal gods, richly shall we all deserve our fate, for having come into this den but as masters riding over the necks of those lost and lowest of mankind."

It was fortunate for the speaker that he spoke in a language but little known to our bold peasantry. The senators held their peace, and waited for the subsiding of the popular effervescence.

"Noble Æmilius!" exclaimed the fiery youth, to a grave and lofty-countenanced man at the head of the mission, "to

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The Roman rushed at him with his drawn falchion.

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remain here is only to risk your safety and the honor of the Emperor. Treaty with this people is out of the question. Give me the order to disperse this rabble, and a single charge will decide the affair."

A Marvel
Marvels

He threw himself forward on his horse's neck, and fixed his look eagerly on the senator's countenance. But the old Roman was immovable. The man of prophecy, who had stood with his robe wrapped round his arms in an attitude of contemptuous ease, awaiting the result of the demand, burst into loud laughter. The young soldier's indignation was roused by this new object. He turned to the scorner, and crying out, "Ho! is it you, miscreant? You at least shall not escape me," flung his lance full against his bosom. I saw the weapon strike with prodigious force, but it might as well have struck a rock. It flew into splinters.

The Roman rushed at him with his drawn falchion. His strange antagonist stood without moving a limb, and only raised his cold, large eye. The charger, in his fiercest bound, instantly swerved, and had nearly unseated his rider. Nothing could bring him forward again. Spur and voice were useless. The animal, a magnificent jet black, of the largest Arab breed, strong as a bull and bold as a lion, could not abide that stern eye. He galloped madly round and round, but the attempt to force him against the stranger stopped him as if he were stabbed. Then with every muscle in his frame palpitating, his broad chest heaving, his nostrils breathing out vapor, and the foam flying over his front like snow, he would plunge and rear until, mastering his powerful rider, he wheeled round and darted away.

The shouts of scorn that rose from the populace at every fresh failure, doubly enraged the young Roman. He made a final effort, and grasping the bridle in both hands, and dashing in the spur, at length succeeded in forcing the wearied charger on. The noble creature, at one immense leap, reached the fatal spot. But there he was fixed as if some power had transformed him into stone. He no longer staggered nor swerved, but crouching down, with his feet thrust forward, his crest stooped, his nostrils on the ground, and his bright

Salathiel ms Resentment

eye strained and filmy, as if he were growing blind, stood gazing with a look of almost human horror. The furious rider struck him on the head with the flat of his falchion. The charger gathered up his limbs at the blow, reared straight as a column, and bellowing, plunged upon his head. There was a general cry of terror, even among the multitude, and they rushed forward to help him to rise. But he rose no more. He rolled over and over his rider, and, stretching out his limbs in a convulsion, died.

The tumult was on the point of being renewed, for the soldiery pushed forward to bear away their officer, who lay like a corpse; but the crowd had already covered the ground, and blows were given on both sides. Indignant at the interruption of the armistice, and the injury that threatened the sacred person of ambassadors, I forced my way through the crowd; by exerting a strength with which few could cope, rescued the young Roman, and delivering him to the mission, protested against their construing the casual violence of rioters into the determination of the people.

I had partially succeeded in calming their resentment, and in restraining the bloodthirsty weapons that were already glittering in numberless hands, when a sound like that of a trumpet, distant but blown with tremendous force, struck every ear at once.

I looked involuntarily to the man who had already been our disturber. He pointed to the heavens. A fragment of cloud, that seemed to have escaped from the mass of the tempest, was floating along the zenith. He took up his parable:

"Have I not covered the heavens with a cloud? saith the Mighty One. Have I not said to the sun, Be dark; and to the moon and stars, Be ashamed? Have I not hidden Mine enemies in the shroud, and said to the whirlwind, Go forth and slay?"

His gesture turned all eyes to the wrecks of the Roman camp, where the whirlwind continued to ravage and the thunders still roared. Then throwing himself forward with a look full of wild grandeur, and in a voice hollow and appalling as the storm, he exclaimed:

"Behold! this day shall a wonder be wrought among you —this day shall a mighty thing be brought to pass. Kings shall see it and tremble; yea, the heathen shall melt before thee. Their strength shall be as water and their hearts as the burning flax. Sorrow shall be on them, as the locust on the green field, and they shall flee as from a lion. Behold! in a cloud shall a sword be brandished before thee; in smoke and in fire shalt thou conquer. For His angel shall come, and the sword and the flame shall at this hour be a sign unto Israel!" The Flaming Sword

Whether by the proverbial sagacity of the wanderers of the desert, by one of those coincidences which so curiously come to sustain the credit of daring conjecture, or by knowledge from some darker sources, the little orbed vapor began to lengthen and rapidly assumed the shape of a sword.

Dreading the popular power of imposture, and the uses to which it would inevitably be applied, I was glad that this extraordinary being had thus put himself upon his trial; and I stood gazing in eager expectation that some passing gust would dissipate at once the cloud and the reputation of the prophet. Yet utterly scorning the common pretensions of the rambling practisers of forbidden arts, I knew that awful things had been done; that most of all, in these latter days of our country, strange influences were let loose, perhaps to plunge into deeper ruin a people guiltily prone to take refuge in delusions. I had heard prophecies, hideous and unholy, which were never taught by man; I had seen a command of the elements that utterly defied philosophy to account for it; if in the last vengeance of Heaven, evil spirits were ever suffered to go forth and give their power to evil men, for the purpose of binding in the faster chains of falsehood a race who loved a lie, it was in those hours of signs and wonders which might, if possible, deceive the very elect.

To my astonishment, the cloud suddenly changed its color; from white it became intensely red; and in a few moments more it burst into a flame that threw a broad reflection upon the whole atmosphere. It was a vast falchion of fire. And from that hour to the last of the glorious and unhappy city of David, that flaming sword—the sign of a wrath predicted

Superstition and Inexpiable Murder

a thousand years before—blazed day and night over Jerusalem!

Its instant effect was terrible. The multitude, already indignant against the Romans, and restrained only by my desperate efforts, were now roused to the highest pitch of presumption. To doubt of the help of Heaven was impiety, after this open wonder; to spare an hour between this divine command and the extermination of the idolater was sacrilege. They poured round the unfortunate troop and instantly overwhelmed them, as an earthquake would have overwhelmed them. A mass of human life, dense as the ground it trod upon, broke over them. The Romans struggled heroically; I saw their charges often make fearful way, and their swords and lances dripping with blood every time they were whirled round their heads. But the conflict was too unequal; one by one those brave men were torn down; I saw them swept along by the torrent, fewer and fewer, still above the living wave; gradually separated more widely from each other; each man faintly struggling for himself, flinging his feeble arms to the right and left, till, dizzy with fatigue and despair, at last he went down, and the roaring tide closed over him.

All perished, and a day of hope was closed in superstition, treachery, and inexpiable murder.

The dreadful uproar sank as suddenly as it had risen. The Roman troop lay a heap of dead. I turned away from the sight, but at the instant of turning I saw the prophet of evil, whether impostor or magician, whether man or demon, spring into their midst with a roar of laughter. I shrank away. But I heard that terrible laugh ringing through all the streets of Jerusalem!

CHAPTER LIII

A Fatal Sign

It was night, and the greater portion of the city lay between me and home. To traverse it was still a matter of danger. Furious festivity had succeeded to furious conflict; the roving mountaineers made little difference between a stranger and an enemy, and whether inflamed with wine or triumph, the carousers on that night were the masters of Jerusalem.

I kept my course through the less frequented ways, and leaving on either side the great avenues, crowded with tents and glittering with illumination, committed myself to the quiet light of the moon.

But in choosing the more solitary streets, I was, without recollecting it, led into the open place where the late disturbance had begun, and I felt some vague dread of passing a spot on which had appeared a being so singular as the leader of the tumult.

By a compromise with my prudence, I kept as far from the hillock as possible, and was moving rapidly by the wall of one of the huge buildings of Herod, when I heard a groan. In the nervousness of the time, and doubtful from what region of earth or air my antagonist, in that place of spells, might come, I drew my dagger with a sensation that I had never felt in the field, and setting my back against the wall, stood on my defense. But a wounded man, the utterer of the groan, now tottered into the light and fell before me. I recognized the commander of the escort. The dying struggles of his charger had crushed him, and the multitude had abandoned him to his fate.

To leave him where he was, was to leave him to perish. I owed something to the survivor of the unfortunate mission,

ssengers of
od Tidings

and my short consultation closed by carrying him on my shoulders to the door of my comfortless dwelling.

The Roman had learned to distrust Jewish fidelity. The gloom inside the entrance looked the very color of secret murder. Even the dismantled appearance of the exterior was enough for suspicion, and he firmly ordered that I should terminate my good offices at the threshold. Irritated by his obvious meaning, I left him to his wish, and placing him in the fullest enjoyment of such security as the open street and the moonlight could give, took my farewell, bidding him in future to have a better opinion of mankind.

Yet I was to be startled in my turn. As I climbed the broken staircases, I saw an unusual light in the chambers above. Accustomed as I was to reverses, I felt tenfold alarm from the preciousness of my stake. The ferocious bands that crowded the streets, inflamed with wine and blood, could have no scruples where plunder tempted them; and in the strong persuasion that some misfortune had happened in my long absence, I lingered in doubt whether I should not return to the streets, collect what assistance I could find among the passersby, and crush the robbers by main force. But sudden exclamations and hurried feet above left me no time; I darted up the shattered steps and breathlessly threw open the door.

Well might I wonder. I saw a superb room, hung with tapestry, a table in the center covered with plate and viands, a rich lamp illuminating the chamber, stately furniture, a fire blazing on a tripod and throwing a cheering warmth and delicious odor round; yet, to enjoy all this, not a living creature. But whatever my anxieties might be, they were delightfully scattered by the voice of Esther, who came flying toward me with outstretched arms and a face bright with joy. From an inner chamber followed more messengers of good tidings—Miriam and Salome leading Constantius! They had watched over him from the time of my departure with a sickly alternation of hope and fear; as the evening approached he seemed dying. Salome, with the jealousy of deep sorrow, desired to be left alone with him; and the two sad listeners

at the door expected at every moment the burst of agony announcing her irreparable loss. They heard a cry of joy; the torpor was gone, and Constantius was sitting up, raised to new life, wondering at all round him, and uttering the raptures of gratitude and love. Salathiel to a Roman A.D.

The sound that had impelled me to my abrupt entrance was the joy of my family at bringing the recovered patient in triumph from his weary bed into view of the comforts provided for him and for me. The change wrought in the chamber itself was explained by the presence of two old domestics who, in the flight of the former possessors, had been overlooked, and suffered to hide, rather than live, in a corner of the ruin. They had contrived in the general spoliation to secrete some of the precious things which the haste of plunder had not time to seize. The presence of a noble family under the honored roof once more brought out their feelings and treasures together, and by the graceful dexterity of Miriam and Esther were those naked walls converted into an apartment not unworthy to be inhabited by themselves.

While I was indulging in the luxury which those gentle ministers provided, the thought of the unfortunate Roman occurred to me. I slightly mentioned him, and every voice was raised to have him brought in from the hazards of the night. Constantius, feeble as he was, rose from his couch to assist in this work of hospitality; but he was under a fond tyrant, who would not suffer her commands to be questioned. Salome's orders were obeyed; and to one of the old domestics and me was destined the undivided honor.

I found the wounded officer lying on the spot where I had parted with him, gazing on the moon and humming a gay air of Italy in a most melancholy tone. He had made up his reckoning with this world, and calmly waiting until some Jewish knife should put an end to his troubles, he determined to save himself from the trouble of thinking, and die like a man who had nothing better to do. But the struggle was against nature, and as I slowly felt my way along the obscure passages, I had time to hear the song flutter and now and then a groan supersede it altogether. My step now caught

The Roman Negotiates

his quick ear, and I heard in return the ringing of a sword plucked sharply from the scabbard.

The bold Roman, reckless as he was of life, was evidently resolved not to let it go without its price, and it was probably fortunate for me, or my old and tottering fellow philanthropist, that the ruinous state of the passages compelled us to take time in our advance.

"Two of them," I heard him mutter as we gradually worked our way toward the light; "two, and perhaps twenty at their backs."

He tried to raise himself, leaning on one hand, and with the other feebly pointing the falchion to keep us off.

"Thieves," said he, "let us understand each other. If you must cut my throat, you must fight for it, and, after all, I have nothing to make it worth your trouble. By Jove and Venus," and he laughed with the strange jocularity that sometimes besets the bold in the last peril, "the cleverest robber in Jerusalem could make nothing of me."

I stood in the shadow, while he again tried his expostulation.

"My clothes would not sell for the smallest coin in your sashes; I could not furnish out a scarecrow—yet Jewish patriots, or thieves, or saints, or all together, I will tell you how you can make money of me. Take me to the Roman camp, and I answer for your fortune on the spot."

I laughed in my turn.

"By all that's honest, I never was more serious in my life," said he; "far be it from me to trifle with heroes of your profession. You shall have my helmetful of gold Vespasians."

"Well, then," said I, coming forward, "you shall live at least for to-night; but there is one condition which I can not give up——"

"Of course, that I give you two helmetsful instead of one. Agreed."

"The condition from which nothing can make me recede is——"

"Three times the money, or ten times the money?"

I pondered. The old domestic stared at us both.

Septimius Recognized

"Why, you extravagant Jew, have you no conscience? Recollect how little the lives of half the generals in the service are worth half the sum. But say anything short of the military chest—out with the condition at once."

"That you come instantly with me—to supper."

The formidable stipulation was gaily acceded to. The old domestic and I supported him up the stairs, whose condition, as he afterward allowed, led him still to nurture shrewd doubt of Jewish hospitality. But when I opened the door of the chamber and he saw the striking preparations within, he uttered a cry of surprise, and turning, bowed with Italian grace, in tacit acknowledgment of the wrong that he had done me.

As I led him forward and the light fell on his features, I saw Esther's countenance glow with crimson. The Roman pronounced her name and flew over to her. Miriam—we all in the same moment recognized the stranger, and every lip at once uttered "Septimius!"

A few campaigns in the imperial guard had changed the handsome Italian boy, the friend and favorite of Constantius, into the showy officer, the friend and favorite of everybody; with the elegance of the court, and the freedom of the camp, he had inherited from nature the easy lightness and animation of temper that neither can give. Nothing could be more amusing than the restless round of anecdote that he kept up through the night. The circle in which he found himself, contrasted with the wretchedness of the few hours before, let his recollections flow with wild vivacity. His stories of the imperial tent were new to us, and he told them with the taste of a man of high breeding and the sarcastic finish of a keen observer of the absurdities that will creep in even among the mighty and the wise of the world.

In our several ways he delighted us all. Constantius seemed to gain new health in laughing at the histories of his military friends. Salome's face glistened with the vividness so long chased away by sorrow, as the manners of Rome passed before her in the liveliest colors of pleasantry. Esther

A Precarious Position

treasured every word with an emotion that fluctuated across her beauty like the opening and shutting of a rose under the evening breeze. I was interested by the pungent sketches of public character that started up in the midst of sportive description. Miriam alone was reluctant, and her glance frequently rested with pain on Esther's hectic cheek. But even Miriam at times gave way to the voice of the charmer; her fears were forgotten, and she joined in the general smile.

When the women retired, we held a short consultation on the means of restoring our guest to his friends. In the immediate temper of the city, to be seen was certain death, and no pacific intercourse with the besiegers could be expected after our enormous infraction of treaty. Constantius urged the despatch of a private messenger to the camp with the proposal of a plan for his escape. To my surprise, and certainly to my gratification, Septimius himself flatly negatived the measure.

"It has too much hazard for my taste," said he sportively. "Your messenger will probably be caught by the people and as probably hanged; or if he reach the camp, he will be hanged there inevitably. Jewish credit, I regret to say, will not stand high within these twelve hours, with my countrymen. If the fellow die here like a woman, with a story in his mouth, you will all be brought under the justice of your sovereign lord the mob. If my countrymen inflict the ax, you are not the safer, for every peasant about the camp is a spy, and the news will travel here in the next half-hour, and after all, your trouble will be thrown away. Titus has good-nature enough, and probably would not wish to see me hoisted on the top of a pike on your gates; but he is a furious disciplinarian, swears by the law of honor and arms, and is, I can well believe, chafing like a roused lion against every one who has had a share in this day's business. I myself should have a chance of hanging, for an example, if I returned before his imperial displeasure had time to cool. So I must trespass on your hospitality for a day or two."

"But what is to be finally done?" said I. "The armistice can never be tried again."

"Why not? Do you think that the loss of a few troopers can make any difference? Out of twenty thousand cavalry, we can easily spare a hundred. Those things have happened once a week since the beginning of the campaign. They agree with our notions admirably. The survivors get promotion, and whatever libation they may offer for their good luck; it is certainly not tears. A stupid officer, and on this occasion I fairly reckon myself among the number, is taken off the muster-roll, before he might have the opportunity of doing mischief by some blunder on a larger scale. Experience is gained; we are entrapped no more, at least in the same way; and a group of unfortunates, who have spent half their lives in being browbeaten by their superiors, suddenly start into rank, become superiors themselves, and learn to browbeat in their turn. You will have the armistice again in a week."

This confession of soldiership repelled me a little, but its air of frankness and disregard of chance and care carried it off showily. I, too, was but a peasant-soldier, with my heart in everything. The man before me was a son of the camp, the professional warrior, whose business it was to stifle all feelings but those of the camp. Yet heroism and hard-heartedness—I could not join them. I had still something to learn, and the gay philosopher of the sword lost ground with me.

I was retiring for the night when I felt the soft hand of Miriam on my shoulder.

"I have been anxious," she said, "to ask your opinion about this Roman."

Her fine countenance, that reflected every emotion of her spirit like a mirror, showed that the subject was one of deep interest. "Is misfortune always to pursue us, Salathiel?"

"In what new shape now?" said I. "We have spent some hours, as amusing as I ever remember. What can have occurred since this morning, when your philosophy made so light of our actual evils?"

"For external evils I have but little feeling," was her answer; "but I see in the chance that brought the Roman here to-night something of the fate which you have so often

Salathiel on His Guard

thought to follow your house. I tremble for Esther's peace of mind. What if she should be attracted by this idolater?"

"Esther! my darling Esther! love an alien, a Roman, an idolater? What an abyss you open before me!" I exclaimed, with a sudden sense of evil.

There was a pause; my wife again spoke.

"While Septimius remained among us in the mountains, I saw with terror that Esther's beauty attracted him. His Italian elegance was even then a dangerous charm for a mind so inexperienced and so sensitive as hers. I knew the impossibility of their union, and rejoiced when his recovery allowed of his leaving the palace. But for a long period after, Esther was evidently unhappy; her cheerfulness gave way; she became fonder of solitude, and I believe that nothing but extreme care and the change of scene which followed, preserved her from the grave."

"Miriam! I have no comfort to offer. I am a stricken man; misfortune must be my portion. But if anything were to bereave me of that girl, I feel that my heart would break. We must delay no longer. By the first light the Roman shall quit this house—this city. He shall not stay another hour to poison the peace of my family—the only peace that I now can possess in this world."

"Yet rashness must not disgrace what is true wisdom, my Salathiel. The Roman is here protected by the laws of courtesy. You can not send him forth without giving him over to the horrid temper of the populace. A few days may make that escape easy which would now be impossible. Besides, I may have done him injustice, and mistaken the common pleasure of seeing unexpected friends for the attempt to mislead the affections of our innocent and ardent child."

"No! By the first light he leaves this roof. The truth glares on me. I might have seen it in his looks. His language, however general, was perpetually directed to Esther by some personal allusion. His voice lost its ease when he answered a syllable of hers. After she spoke he affected abstraction—an old artifice. His manner is too well calculated to disturb the mind of woman—and most of all of woman

cursed with feeling and genius. Esther has already exa this showy stranger into a wonder. I must break the spell. What is to become of her, of me, man of misery? By the first dawn the Roman takes his departure."

In the bitterness of soul I turned from the chamber, where the lamp was still burning and the glittering table looked too bright for the gloomy spirit of the hour. The cool air that breathed through a casement led me toward it, and disinclined to speak and holding Miriam's gentle hand, I listened to the confused murmurs of the city far below. I suddenly felt the hand in mine tremble convulsively. Miriam's face was pale with fear; she stood with lips apart and breathless, brows raised, eyes straining upward. In utter alarm I asked the cause. She lifted the hand, which had fallen by her side, and slowly, like the staff of the soothsayer, pointed it to the heavens. The cause was there. The ominous sword had for the first time met her eye. The blaze, which even in noonday was fearfully visible, in midnight was tremendous. A blade of the deepest hue of gore stretched to the horizon, pouring from its edge perpetual showers of crimson flame, that looked like showers of fresh blood. Boundless slaughter was in the emblem. Beyond it the circle of the sky was wan; the stars sickened, and the moon, tho at the full, hung like an orb of lead. The mighty falchion, the pledge of an inevitable judgment," extinguished all the beneficent splendors of heaven.

"There, there is the sign that I have seen for months in my dreams," said Miriam in an awed voice; "that has haunted me when I laid my head upon the pillow; that has been before my mind in the day wherever I moved; that I have seen coloring every object, every moment of my life since I entered these fated walls. I have struggled to drive away the horrid image; I have wept and prayed. But it was where nothing could unfix it. It was pictured on my soul, and with it came other images, fearful, tho they brought me no terrors—melancholy sights to those who have no hope but here, yet glorious to the servants of the truth, Salathiel. I have had warnings. I must never leave the city of David."

Miriam Comforts Salathiel

She knelt in the deep prayer of the soul. Her words came on me with the power of prophecy.

"King and protector of Israel!" I exclaimed, "is this to be the suffering of Thy people? On me let Thy wrath be done, but spare her who now kneels before Thee. Are the pure to be given into the hands of the merciless and Thy children to be trampled as the ashes of the unholy?"

My impatient voice caught Miriam's ear, and she rose with a countenance beaming piety and love.

"Salathiel, we must not murmur. Even that sight of awe, that terrible emblem, has taught me the selfishness of my anxieties. What are our personal sorrows to the weight of affliction figured in that instrument of supreme justice? The wo of millions, the blood of a nation, the ruin of the glorious Law, built by the hands of the Eternal, for the glory and good of mankind, are written in words of flame before our eyes; and can I complain of the perils which may fall to my share? Henceforth, my husband and my love"—and she threw herself into my willing arms—"you shall never be disturbed with my sorrows; exercise your own powerful understanding, guard against evil by your talents and knowledge of life, as far as it can be guarded against by man, and beyond that, cease to repine or fear. In my supplication I have committed our darling child into the hands of Him who sitteth within the circle of eternity!"

Quivering with every finer feeling of the heart, maternal love, matron faith, and grateful adoration, she hung upon my neck, until as if a portion of her noble spirit had passed into mine, I felt a confidence and a consolation like her own.

CHAPTER LIV

Concerning Septimius

I WAS spared the ungraciousness of urging the young soldier's departure, for when I met him on the next morning his first topic was escape. He had been since daybreak examining from my turrets the accessible passages of the fortifications, and had even, by the help of a peasant, despatched a letter to his friends, requesting either a formal demand of his person from the Jews, or some private effort to extricate him. Vexed and suspicious

But this glow of society was transient. In the fall of his charger he had been violently bruised. He now complained of inward suffering, and his pallid face and feeble words gave painful proof that he had much still to undergo, tho, even if he was perfectly recovered, the crowded battlements and the popular rage showed the impossibility of immediate return.

Three days passed thus drearily. At home I was surrounded by sickness or vexed by suspicion—the worst sickness of the mind. Septimius lay in his chamber, struggling to laugh, talk, and read away the heavy hours, and finally, like all such strugglers, giving up the task in despair. His thoughts were in the Roman camp. He professed gratitude of the deepest nature for the service that I had done him now for the second time, if saving so unimportant a life was a service either to him or any one else. Yet he almost wished that he had been left where he was found.

At such times his voice sank, and he was evidently thinking of subjects near to his heart.

Then his soldiership would come again—a man could not finish his course better than among his gallant comrades; and

Watched by a Slave

with all his anxiety to return, he felt no trivial concern as to the view which Titus might take of the whole unfortunate affair. Of justice he was secure; but to be questioned for his military conduct was in itself a degradation. The loss of Sempronius, too, the most confidential friend and counselor of the Emperor, would weigh heavily—while there was nothing but his own testimony to sustain his honor against the crowd of secret enemies that every man of military rank was certain to have.

"In short," said he, "on my sleepless couch I have turned true penitent for the foolish curiosity which prompted me to solicit the command of an escort, which would have been by right put under the care of some mere tribune."

I tried to cheer him by saying that his had been only the natural desire of an active mind to see so singular a scene as our city offered, or the honorable wish of a soldier to be foremost wherever there was anything to be done.

"It was more than either," said he; "there was actual illusion in the case. I now feel that I was practised upon. You know the strange concourse of all kinds of people that follow a camp for all kinds of purposes—plunderers, traders, and jugglers, crowding on our movements as regularly as the vultures, and with nearly the same objects. For a week past I had found myself beset by an old gibbering slave of this class. Wherever I rode, the fellow was before my eyes; he contrived to mingle with my servants, and became a sort of favorite by selling them counterfeit rings and gems at ten times their value. The wretch was clever, too, and as my tent-hours began to be disturbed by the unusual gaiety of the listeners to his lies, I ordered him to be flogged out of the lines. But twelve hours had not passed before I found him gambolling again, and was about to order the instant infliction of the discipline, when he threw himself on the ground and implored 'a moment of my secret ear.' Conceive who the fellow was?"

"The impostor who harangued in the square!"

"The very man. He told me that there were certain contrivances on foot to bring me into disfavor with the general, which I knew to be the fact. He gave me the names of the

parties, which I felt to be sufficiently probable, and finished by saying that, having so long eaten of my bread (a week), and enjoyed my liberality (the scourge), he longed to show his gratitude by giving me an opportunity of putting my enemies to silence on the spot. This opportunity was to solicit the command of the escort required for the mission. How he gained his wisdom I know not, but I took the advice, went at once to Titus, found that an armistice was being debated in council, that there was some difficulty in the choice of an officer for the service (by no means likely to be a sinecure in point of either judgment or hazard), stepped forward, and, to the surprise of everybody, disclaimed the privileges of my rank and insisted on marching at the head of this handful, this outpost-guard, into the formidable city of Jerusalem."

Duped by Juggler

"His object, of course," said I, "was your destruction. I now see the cause of the harangue that roused the people; he was in the pay of the conspirators against you. Yet his appearance was striking; there was a vigor about his look and language, a fierce consciousness of power somewhere, that distinguished him from his race. He came, too, and has disappeared, without my being able to discover whence or whither."

"Oh, the commonest contrivance of his trade," was the reply. "Those fellows always come and go in cloud, if they can. He was probably beside you half the day before and after. You saw how little he thought of the lance, that I sent to bring out his hidden secrets. He doubtless wore armor; otherwise there would have been one juggler the less in the world. The truth is, I have been duped, but I have made up my mind to think nothing about the dupery. The slave is certainly clever, perhaps to an extraordinary degree—a villain undoubtedly, and of the first magnitude. But he has the secret of the cabal against me, and that secret makes him at once fit to be employed, and dangerous to be provoked. The blow of the lance yesterday showed him that I am not always to be trifled with. In fact, prince, you might find it advantageous to employ him occasionally yourself. It was he who conveyed my letter to the camp this morning!"

My look probably expressed my dislike of this species of envoy.

"You may rely on my honor," said the Roman, "not to involve you in any of the fellow's inventions. Slippery as he is, I have a hold on him, too, that he will not venture to shake off. And now, to let you into full confidence, I expect him back this very night, when he will relieve your city of an inhabitant unworthy of remaining among so polished a people; and your house, my prince, of an inmate than whom none on earth can be more grateful for your hospitality."

He concluded this mixture of levity, address, and frankness with a smile, and in a tone of elegance, that compelled me to take it all on the more favorable side. But against suffering the step of his strange emissary to pollute the threshold in which I lived, I expressed my plain determination.

"For that, too, I have provided," said he. "My intercourse with the reprobate is to take place at another quarter of the city, as far as possible from this dwelling," and he laughed, "for reasons equally of mine and yours. I have managed matters so as not to compromise any of my friends; and to make my arrangements on that point still more secure, may I express a wish that neither Constantius nor any other person of your house may be acquainted with my intention of leaving them, and I may sincerely say, leaving everything that could gratify my best feelings—this very evening."

This was an easy and graceful avoidance of the difficulties which his longer residence threatened. I gave him the promise of secrecy, cautioning him against reposing any dangerous confidence in his emissary, of whom I had an irrepressible abhorrence, and was about to leave the chamber when he caught my hand and said in unusual emotion:

"Prince of Naphtali, I have but one word more to say. You are a man of the world and can make allowance for the giddiness of human passions. Some of them are uncontrollable, or at least I have never learned to control them, and in me perhaps they belong to inferiority of mind. But if on my departure you should hear calumnies against me——"

"Impossible, my young friend; or if I should, you may rely on my giving the calumniators a very brief answer."

"Or if even yourself should be disposed to think severely of me, you know the circumstances under which a man of birth and fortune must be placed in our profession."

"Fully, and am much more disposed to regret than to wonder at the consequences."

"If you should hear that I had been assailed in an evil hour by an unexpected temptation which I had long labored to resist, assailed by it under the most powerful circumstances that ever yet tasked the human mind, circumstances to which, from the beginning of the world, wisdom has been proverbially folly, and resolution weakness; if it should have mastered my whole being, soul and body; if I were willing to give up the brightest prospects for its possession—to hazard life, hope, honors——"

The thought of Esther smote me. I started from him where he stood, with his fine head drooping like the Antinous and his figure the very emblem of passionate dejection.

"Roman, you are here as my guest, and as such I have listened to you with patience until now. But if any member of my family is concerned in what you say, I demand in the most distinct terms that the subject shall be mentioned no more. The daughters of Israel are sacred. Never shall a child of mine wed with those who now lord it over my unhappy country."

He spread his hands and eyes in the broadest astonishment.

"Prince, can it be possible that you have so totally mistaken me? My perplexities are of an entirely different nature. The chain with which I am bound is not of roses, but of iron; a chain of invisible, yet stern influences, that haunt my night, and even my day."

His voice faltered, and he turned away with a shudder, as from a visionary tormentor.

"What? Has that man of desperate arts, if he be man, involved you, too, in his net? Dares the impostor soar so high?"

He clasped his hands.

"You saw how he defied, how he mocked me, how he

"Be a Man—a Hero"

spurned me when my abhorrence rose to the madness of attempting to strike him. I might as well have flung the weapon at the clouds. You saw the instinctive terror of my charger. That animal was celebrated in our whole cavalry for its bold, nay, fierce courage. Yet before the eye of that man of power and evil, it cowered like a hare and died of his glance. By him the temptation has been offered; of its nature I dare not speak; but it is dazzling, fearful, and must—I feel it—finally be fatal."

"Then cast it from you at once. Be a man—a hero."

"It is hopeless—I must be the victim; I am bound irretrievably. Farewell, prince; we shall see each other no more."

He flung himself upon the couch. I offered him assistance, advice, consolation in vain. The spirit of the soldier was extinguished. The victim of fantastic illusion lay before me. I left him to the care of the old domestics, and when I closed the door, thought that I had closed the door of the grave.

CHAPTER LV

Salathiel a Prisoner

DURING this period the city presented the turbulent aspect that must result from the concourse of vast warlike multitudes, known only by hereditary bickerings. The clansman of Judah looked down upon every human being, and his countrymen among the rest. The Benjamite retorted it, boasted of the inheritance of Jerusalem, and looked down upon the men of the Galilees as rioters and plunderers. These, too, had their objects of scorn, and the remnants of Dan and Ephraim were held in merciless disdain as the descendants of rebels and idolaters. To deepen those ancient feuds were thrown in the mutual injuries of the factions of John and Simon. Their leaders were now but the shadow of what they had been; yet the memory of their mischiefs survived with a keenness aggravated by the public discovery of the insignificance of the instruments. The Vani Conqu

Genius in the tyrant offers the consolation that if the chain has galled us, it has been bound by a hand made for supremacy. But the last misery of the slave is to have been bound by a creature even more contemptible than himself; to have given to folly the homage due to talent; to have stooped before the base and trembled under the feeble.

The obvious alarm of the enemy, who had now totally withdrawn from the plain and were occupied with raising rampart on rampart round their several camps; the triumph over the unfortunate troop; and the excitement of a crowd of pretended prophets and frantic visionaries, filled the populace with every vanity of conquest. The constant exclamation in the streets was: "Let us march to storm the camps and drive the idolater into the sea!" But the new luxuries of the city were too congenial not to act as formidable rivals to the popular am-

Sabat's Wandering

bition. No leader appeared, the boastings passed away, and the boiling temperament of the warrior had time to run into the safer channel of words and wine.

Still one melancholy reminder was there. Through the wildest festivity, through the groups of drinking, dancing, bravadoing, and quarreling, Sabat the Ishmaelite moved day after day, from dawn till evening, pouring out his sentences of condemnation. Nothing could be more singular or more awful than his figure as the denouncer of ruin hurried along, like a being denuded of all objects in life but the one. The multitude in their most extravagant excesses felt undissembled fear before him. I have seen the most ferocious tumult stilled by the sound of his portentous voice; the dagger instantly sheathed; the head buried in the garment; the form often prostrate until he passed by. Where he went the song of license was dumb; the dance ceased; the cup fell from the hand; and many a lip of violence and blasphemy quivered with long-forgotten prayer.

How he sustained life none could tell. He was reduced to a shadow; his eye had the yellow glare of blindness; his once raven hair was of the whiteness of flax. He was an animated corpse. But he strode onward with a force which, if few attempted to resist, none seemed able to withstand; his gestures were rapid and nervous to an extraordinary degree, and his voice was overwhelming. It had the rush and volume of a powerful blast. Even in the clamor of the day, through the innumerable voices of the streets, it was audible from the remotest quarters of the city. I heard it through the tread and shouts of fifty thousand marching men. But in twilight and silence the eternal "Wo!—wo!—wo!" howled along the air with a sound that told of nothing human.

His unfortunate bride still followed him, never uttering a word, never looking but on him. She glided along with him in his swiftest course, as bound by a spell to wander where he wandered, an unconscious slave; her form almost a shadow; without a sound, a gesture, or a glance—her feet alone moved.

I often attempted to render this undone pair some assistance. Sabat recognized me, and returned brief thanks, and

perhaps I was the only man in Jerusalem to whom he vouchsafed either thanks or memory. But he uniformly refused aid of every kind, and reproaching himself for the moment given to human recollections, burst away and again began his denunciation of "Wo!—wo!—wo!" Salathiel's Presentiment of Ills

The hope of treaty with the besiegers was now nearly desperate; yet I felt so deeply the ruin that must follow protracted war that I had labored with incessant anxiety to bring the people to a sense of their situation. My name was high; my decided refusal of all command gave me an influence which threw more grasping ambition into the shade; and the leading men of Jerusalem were glad to delegate their power to me, with the double object of relieving themselves from an effort to which they were unequal, and from a responsibility under which even their covetousness had begun to tremble.

But Jerusalem was not to be saved;" there was an opposing fatality—an irresistible, intangible power arrayed against all efforts. I felt it at my first step. If I had been treading on a volcano and heard it roar under me, I could not have been made more sensible of the hollowness and hopelessness of every effort to save the nation. In the midst of our most according council some luckless impediment was sure to start up. While we seemed on the verge of conciliating and securing the most important interests, to that verge we were suddenly forbidden all approach. Communications actually commenced with the Roman general, and which promised the most certain results, were broken off, none could tell how. There was an antagonist somewhere, but beyond our grasp; a hostility as powerful, as constant, and as little capable of being counteracted as the hostility of the plague.

After my final conversation with Septimius, I had spent the day in one of those perplexing deliberations, and was returning with a weary heart when, in an obscure street leading into the Upper City, I was roused from my reverie by the sound of one of our mountain songs. Music has been among my chief solaces through existence, and the song of Naphtali in that moment of depression keenly moved me. I stopped to listen in front of the minstrel's tent, in which a circle of sol-

"Esther is Gone!"

diers and shepherds from the Galilees were sitting over their cups. His skill deserved a higher audience. He touched his little harp with elegance to a voice that reminded me of the sportiveness and wild melody of a bird in spring. The moonlight shone through the tent, and as the boy sat under its large white folds in the fantastic dress of his art—a loose vermilion robe, belted with sparkling stones, and turban of yellow silk, that drooped upon his shoulder like a golden pinion—he resembled the Persian pictures of the Peri embosomed in the bell of the lily. The rude and dark-featured listeners round him might well have sat for the swart demons submissive to his will.

But thoughts soon returned that were not to be soothed by music, and throwing some pieces of money to the boy, I hastened on. The departure of the young Roman and the influence that it might have on my family, and peculiarly on the mind of a creature doubly endeared to me by a strange and melancholy similitude to the temper of my own excitable mind, deeply occupied me, and it was even with some presentiment of evil that I reached home.

The first sound that I heard was the lamentation of the old domestics. But I could not wait to solve their unintelligible attempts to explain the disaster. I flew to my family. Miriam was absorbed in profound sorrow; Salome was in loud affliction. Dreading everything that could be told me, yet with that sullen hardihood which long misfortune gives, I took my wife's hands and in a voice struggling for composure desired her to tell me the worst at once.

"Esther is gone!" was her answer.

She could articulate no more; the effort to speak this shook her whole frame. But Salome broke out into loud reprobation of the baseness of the wretch who had turned our hospitality into a snare, and whose life, twice saved, was employed only to bring misery on his preserver.

The blow fell upon me with the keenness of a sword.

"Was Esther, was my daughter, my innocent, darling Esther, consenting to this flight?"

"I know not," said Miriam. "I dare not ask myself the

question. If she can have forgotten her duty to follow the stranger; if she can have left her parents—no. It must have been through some horrid artifice. But the thought is too bitter. Raise no more such thoughts in my mind."

She sank in silence. But Salome was not to be restrained. She asserted the total impossibility of Esther's having thrown off her allegiance to religion and filial duty.

"She must have been," said this generous and enthusiastic being, "either subjected to those dreadful arts in which the idolaters deal, or carried away by force. Constantius has gone already in search of her; feeble as he is, he determined to discover the robber, and tho his steps were weak and the effort may hazard his life, he would not be restrained, nor would I restrain him where I should have so much rejoiced to hazard my own."

I rose to depart. Miriam clung to me.

"Must I lose all, Salathiel?"

"I am the guilty one, wife! I should have guarded against this. I alone am to blame. I will recover Esther. Without her we all should be miserable. The Roman general is just. I will demand her of Septimius in his presence. Miriam! you shall see your child. Salome! you shall see your sister. And now, come to my heart—come both; my last hope of happiness, the remnant of all that once promised to fill my declining days with peace and prosperity. Weep no more, Miriam, Salome! I must not be unmanned at this time of trial. Go to your chambers and pray for me. Farewell!"

It was nearly midnight and the city sounds were hushed, except where the crowds, which still poured in, struggled for their quarters. The very fear of being thus disturbed kept up the disturbance of the population, and in the leading avenues the tents showed fierce watchers against this violence sitting round their tables, until wine either sent them to sleep or roused them into daggers-drawing. Subordination was now at an end; plunder and blood were to be dreaded by every man who ventured among those champions of freedom and property; and more than once this night I was compelled to show that I wore a weapon.

Ishtiel's Old Enemy

Yet the disorder which left the city a seat of dissolute riot was not suffered to interfere with its actual defense. That singular mixture of rabble giddiness and sacred care which distinguished my countrymen above all nations was fully displayed in those final hours, and the walls that enclosed a million of rioters and robbers were guarded with the solemn vigilance of a sanctuary.

No argument could prevail with the peasantry at the gates to let me pass. My rank, and even my public name, went for little in the scale against the possibility of my renewing the treaty with an enemy whom they now scorned, and I was doubting whether I must not lose the night by the reluctance of those rough but honest sentinels, when I was cheered by seeing one of the head men of their tribe arrive. He had been a furious partizan; honor and honesty were his declared worship, and his horror of humbler motives was fierceness itself. This was enough for me. I knew what public vehemence means. I took him aside, without ceremony put gold into his grasp, and saw the gate thrown open before me by the immaculate hand of the patriotic Jonathan.

While I had scarcely congratulated myself on having passed this formidable barrier and was still within the defenses, the trampling of horse echoed on the road. The night was clear, and there was no hope of avoiding them. A large body of Idumean horsemen came on, escorting wagons of provision. The foremost riders were half asleep, and I was in strong hope of eluding them all when one of the drivers, in the wantonness of authority, laid his whip on me. I rashly returned the blow, and the man fell off his horse. I was surrounded, charged with murder; was brought before their chieftain, and found that chieftain Onias!

My old enemy recognized me instantly, and with undying revenge firing every feature demanded whither I was going.

"To the Roman camp," was the direct answer.

"The purpose?"

"To have an interview with the Roman general."

"You come deputed by the authorities?"

"By not one of them."

"I long ago knew you to be a daring fellow, but you exceed my opinion. We can not spare heroes from Jerusalem at this time; you must turn back with us."

"By what right?"

"By the right of the stronger."

"With what object?"

"That you may be hanged as a deserter. It will save you the trouble of going to Titus, to be hanged as a spy."

I disdained reply, and in the midst of a circle of barbarians exulting over their capture, as if they had taken the chief enemy of the state, was marched back to the walls.

There I was not the only person disturbed by the adventure. The first glimpse of me caught by Jonathan exhibited everything that could be ludicrous in the shape of consternation. To the inquiries how I was suffered to pass he answered by an appeal to his "honor," which he again valued, in my presence too, "as the most invaluable possession of the citizen soldier." He said the words without a blush, and I even listened to them without a smile. He probably trembled a little for his bribe; but he soon discovered by my look that I considered the money as too far gone to be worth pursuing.

Yet Onias, who seemed to know him as well as I, fixed on him a scrutinizing aspect, of all others the most hateful to a delicate conscience, and his only resource was to heap opprobrium upon me.

"How I had contrived to escape the guard," said Jonathan, "was totally inconceivable, unless it was by"—I gave him an assuring glance—"by imposing on the credulity of some of the ignorant peasants; possibly even by direct corruption. But to put the matter out of future possibility he would proceed to examine the prisoner's person."

He proceeded accordingly, and from my sash took my purse, as a public precaution. He was a vigilant guardian of the state, for the purse was never restored.

Onias looked at him during his harangue with a countenance between contempt and ridicule.

"I must go forward now," said he; "but, captain, see to your prisoner. He must answer before the council to-mor-

Salathiel Confined in a Tower

row, and as you have so worthily disabled him from operations with the guard, your own head is answerable for his safe-keeping."

My enemy, to make all sure, himself saw me lodged within the tower over the gate, comforted his soul by a parting promise that my time was come, and rode off with his Idumeans—to the boundless satisfaction of the scrupulous and much-alarmed Jonathan.

The tower was massive, and there was no probability that anything less than a Roman battering-ram would ever lay open its solid sides. The captain had recovered his virtue at the instant of my losing my purse, and I now could no more dream of sapping his integrity than of sapping the huge blocks of the tower. Whether I was to be prisoner for the night, or for the siege, or to glut the ax by morning, were questions which lay in the bosom of as implacable a villain as long-delayed revenge ever made malignant; but what was to become of my child, of my family, of my share in the great cause, for which alone life was of value?

The chamber to which I was consigned was at the top of the tower and overlooked a vast extent of country. Before me were the Roman camps, seen clearly in the moonlight, and wrapt in silence, except when the solitary trumpet sounded the watch, or the heavy tread of a troop going its rounds was heard. The city sounds were but the murmurs of the sinking tide of the multitude. The spring was in her glory. The air came fresh and sweet from the fields. All was tranquillity; yet what a mass of destructive power was lying motionless under that tranquillity! Fire, sword, and man were before me—elements of evil that a touch could rouse into tempest, not to be allayed but by torrents of blood and the ruin of empires.

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"Esther is gone!" was her answer.

See page 420.

CHAPTER LVI

A Narrow Escape

A Basket of Wine

WHILE my mind was wandering away in thoughts of the madness of ambition in so brief a being as man, I heard a loud clamor of voices in the chambers below. The rustic guards had been enjoying themselves, but their wine was already out, and they set their faces boldly against the discipline which pretended to limit the wine of patriots so true and thirsty. The clamor arose from the discovery that the cellars of the tower had been examined by a previous guard, who provided for the temperance of their successors by taking the whole temptation to themselves. High words followed between the abettors of discipline and the partizans of the vintage, and if my door were but unbarred I might have expeditiously relieved the captain of his charge. But its bolts were enormous, and I tried them in vain. As I was giving up the effort, a light footstep ascended the stairs; a key turned in the ponderous wards, and the minstrel of the tent stood before me.

"If you wish to escape from certain death," he whispered, "do as I bid you."

He looked from the casement, sang a few notes, and on being answered from without pulled up a rope, which we hauled in together. The task was of some difficulty, but at length a weighty basket appeared, loaded with wine. He took a portion of the contraband freight in his hands and without a word disappeared. I heard his welcome proclaimed below with loud applause. Half the guard were instantly on the stairs to assist him down with the remainder, but against this he firmly protested, and threatened in case of a single attempt to interfere with his operations that he would awake the captain and publicly give back this incomparable private

A Minstrel's Aid

store to the legitimate hand. The threat was effective; the unlading of the basket was left to his own dexterity, and at length but one solitary flask lay before us.

"You deserve some payment for your trouble," said he, with the careless and jovial air of his brethren. "Here's to your night's enterprise, whatever it be," pouring out a few drops and tasting them, while he gave a large draft to my feverish lips. "And now, good-night, my prince, unless you love the tower too much to take leave of this gallant guard by a window."

"But, boy, if you should be detected in assisting my escape?"

"I have no fear of that," said he. "I have been detected in all sorts of frolics in my time, and yet here I am. The truth is, my prince, I have traveled in your country and have an old honor for your name. No later than to-day you gave me the handsomest present I have got since I came within the walls. I know the noble captain of the guard to be a thorough knave, and the mighty Onias to want nothing for wickedness but the opportunity. In short, the thought occurred to me, on seeing you, to help the honest revelers below to a little more wine than was good for their understandings, the contraband being a commodity in which, between ourselves, I deal; and further to break the laws by assisting you to leave captain, sentinels, and all behind."

I asked what was to be done.

"If you value your life, be the substitute for the empty flasks and make your way through the air like a bird. I shall be safe enough. You need have no fears for me."

I coiled the rope round a beam, forced myself through the narrow casement, and launched out into air at a height of a hundred feet. If I felt any distrust, it was brief. I was rapidly lowered, passing the various casements, in which I saw the successive watches of the guard drinking, sleeping, singing, and discussing public affairs with village rationality. Luckily no eye turned upon the fugitive, and the ground was touched at last.

In another moment the minstrel came, rather flying than

sliding, down the rope. I said something in acknowledgment of this service, but he laid his finger on his lip, and pointing to a rampart, where a moving torch showed me that we were still within observation, led on through paths beset with thickets that no eye could penetrate, but, as he laughingly said, "that of a supplier of garrisons with contraband." But their intricacy offered no obstruction to this stripling; and after amusing himself with my perplexities he led me to the verge of the plain.

"I have detained you," said he, "in these brambles for the double purpose of avoiding the lookout from the battlements and of giving the moon time to hide her blushing beauties."

She lay reddening with the mists on the horizon.

"She has been often called our mother, and as her children the minstrels are allowed the privilege of keeping later hours and being madder than the mob of mankind. But like other children we are sometimes engaged in matters which would dispense with the maternal eye, and to-night I wished that she was many a fathom below the ocean. Mother," said he, throwing himself into an attitude, "take a child's blessing and begone."

The words were spoken to a touch on his little harp—rambling, but singularly sweet.

"Do you know," said he with a sigh, as he turned and saw me gazing in admiration of his skill, "I am weary to death of my profession."

"Then why not leave it? You are fit for better things. Your skill is of the very nature that makes its way in the world."

"Why not leave it? For a hundred reasons. In the first place, I should be more wearied of every other. I should be the bird in the cage, fed, sheltered, and possibly a favorite. But what bird would not rather take the chance of the open air, even to be scorched by the summer and frozen by the winter? No; let me clap my pinions and sing my song under the free canopy of the skies, or be voiceless, and wingless, and—dead."

"Boy, this is the natural language of your years. But the

The Minstrel Guide

time must come when the spirit sinks and man requires other charms in life than the power of roaming."

He hung his head over the harp and let his fingers stray among the strings. The moon was now touching the mountains.

"We must begone," said I. "I owe you something for your night's service, which shall be repaid by taking you into my household should the siege be raised; if not, you are but as you were."

He was all nervous excitement at the offer—wept, laughed, danced, played a prelude upon the strings, kissed my hand, and finally bounded away before me. I called to him, repeating my wish that he should go no farther.

"Impossible," said he; "you would be lost in a moment. If I had not crossed the ground hundreds of times, I should never be able to find my road. Half a mile forward it is all rampart, trench, and ravine. You would be stopped by a myriad of sentinels. Nothing on earth could get to the foot of yonder hills, but an army—or a minstrel."

He ran on before me, and ran with a rapidity that tasked even my foot to follow. We soon came into the fortified ground, and I then felt his value. He led me over fosse and rampart, up the scarp and through the palisade, with the sagacity of instinct. But this was not all. I repeatedly saw the sentinels within a few feet of us, and expected to be challenged every moment, but not a syllable was heard. I passed with patrols of the legionary horse on either side of me; still not a word. I walked through the rows of tents, in which the troops were preparing for the duties of the morning. Not an eye fell upon me, and I almost began to believe myself, like a hero of the heathen fables, covered with a cloud.

The boy still continued racing along, until, on reaching the summit of a mound at some distance in front of me, he uttered a cry and fell. I had heard no challenge, and hurried toward him. A flight of arrows whizzed over my head, and the black visages of a mob of Ethiopian riders [1] came bounding up a hollow between us. It was not my purpose to fight, even if I had any hope of success against marksmen who could hit an

elephant's eye. I surrendered in every language of which I was capable. But the Ethiopians only shook their woolly heads, laid hands on me, and began an investigation of my riches creditable to polished society. Barbarians, with a tongue and physiognomy worthy only of their kindred baboons, probed every plait of my garments, with an accuracy that could have been surpassed only in the most civilized custom-houses of the empire. A succession of shrieks, which I mistook for rage, but which were the mirth of those sons of darkness, were the prelude to measures which augured more formidable consequences. A rope was thrown over my arms, and I was led toward the outposts.

Salathiel's New Captor

Yet even the neighborhood of their Roman friends did not seem the most congenial to my captors. More than one consultation was held, in which their white teeth were bared to the jaw with rage, and their simitars were whirled like so many flashes of lightning about each other's turbans, before they could decide whether my throat was to be cut on the spot, to get rid of an incumbrance, or whether they were to try how far the emptiness of my purse might not be made up by the reward for the capture of a spy in the trappings of a chieftain.

I gave up remonstrance where, if I had all the tongues of Babel, none of them seemed likely to answer my purpose, and reserving the nice distinction between an ambassador and a spy for more cultivated ears, quietly walked onward in the midst of this troop of thieves; the more insensible to honesty or argument, as they were privileged according to law. But our approach to the camp bred another difficulty. The troop felt an obvious disinclination to come too close to the legionaries. Untutored as the negroes were, they had acquired a knowledge of the official conscience, and they bowed to the mastery of the white in plunder as among the accomplishments of an advanced age!

All could not venture to the camp; yet who was to be entrusted with receiving the reward? The discussion was carried on chiefly by gesture, which sometimes proceeded to blows, and at last was wound up to such vigor that a brawny

ruffian, to preserve the peace, seized the rope and, dragging me out the circle, began sharpening his simitar, to extinguish the controversy. But at the instant a horrid outcry arose, and a figure, hideous beyond conception, not a foot high, blacker than the blackest, and darting flames from its mouth, bounded in among us, mounted upon a wild beast of a horse that kicked and tore at everything. The Ethiopians shrieked with terror and scattered on all sides at the first shock, but the ground was so cut up by the military operations that they stumbled at every step. Some were unhorsed; some probably had their necks broken, and others carried home the tale, to spread it through the land of lions. I heard it long after, exciting the utmost amaze in a venerable circle round one of the fountains of the Nile.

I was now saved from being thus summarily made the victim of peace, but was as far as ever from freedom. While I was endeavoring to loose the rope, a patrol of the legionary horse came galloping from the camp, and I was seized with this badge of a bad character upon me. But the flying negroes were the more amusing objects. There was just light enough to see them rolling about the plain; turbans flying off in the air; and the few riders who could boast of keeping their seats, whirled away over brake and brier, at the mercy of their frightened horses. This display, which had been at first taken for the prelude to an assault on the lines, was now a source of pleasantry, and the horsemanship of the savages was honored with many a roar.

My case came next under consideration. "I was found at the edge of the Roman entrenchments, where to be found was to die; I was besides taken with the mark of reprobation upon me."

I pleaded my own merits loudly, and appealed to the rope as evidence that I was not there by my own will. The legionaries were better soldiers than logicians, and my defense perplexed them until some one thought of inquiring what brought me there at all. The troop flocked round to hear my answer to this overwhelming question. I told my purpose in a few words.

The scale again turned in my favor, and I began to think on victory secure, when a young standard-bearer, who was probably destined to rise in the state, declared, with a splenetic tongue and brow of office, that "in this land of cheating too much precaution could not be adopted against cheats of all colors; that the more plausible my story was, the more likely it was to be a falsehood; and finally, that as my escape might do some kind of mischief, while my hanging could do none whatever, it was advisable to hang me without delay."

The orator spoke the words of popularity, and my fate was sealed. But a new difficulty arose. By whom was the sentence to be put in execution?—for the duty would have sullied the legionary honor for life. A trampled African, who lay groaning in a ditch beside me, caught the sound of the debate, dragged himself out, and offered, mangled as he was, to perform the office for any sum that their generosity might think proper to give. Never was man nearer to paying the grand debt than I was at that moment. The African recovered his vigor as by magic, and the young statesman took upon himself the superintendence of this service to his country. I raised my voice loudly against this violence to a "negotiator"; but the troopers of the imperial horse had been roused from their sleep on my account, and they were not to return, liable to the ridicule of having been roused by a false alarm. I still endeavored to put off the evil hour, when the trampling of a large body of cavalry was heard.

"The general!" exclaimed the young officer, who evidently had an instinctive sensibility to the approach of rank.

"Let Titus come," said I, "or any man of honor, and *he* will understand me."

I tore the badge of disgrace from my arms and stepped forward to meet the great son of Vespasian. My confidence alarmed the troop, and the standard-bearer made way for the man who dared to speak to the heir of the throne. But the general was not Titus; a broad, brutal countenance, red with excess, glared haughtily round. I recognized Cestius. A whisper from one of the officers put him in possession of the circumstances, and he rode up to me.

Ben-Hur and Cestius

"So, rebel! you are come to this at last! You have been taken in the fact and must undergo your natural fate."

"I demand to be led to your general. I scorn to defend myself before inferiors."

"Inferiors!" He bit his livid lip. "Traitor, you are not now on the hill of Scopas at the head of an army."

"Nor you," said I, "on the plain at the head of an army—and so much the more fortunate for both you and them. But I scorn to talk to men whose backs I have seen. Lead me to your master, fugitive!"

The troops, unaccustomed to this plain speaking, looked on with wonder. Cestius himself was staggered, but the nature of the man soon returned, and in a voice of fury he ordered a body of Arab archers, who were seen moving at a distance, to be brought up for the extinction of a "traitor unworthy of a Roman sword." The Arabs, exhilarated by the prospect of employment, came up, shouting, tossing their lances, and shooting their arrows. As a last resource, I solemnly protested against this murder, which I pronounced to be the work of a revenge disgraceful to the name of soldier; and taunting Cestius with his defeat, demanded that, if he doubted my honor, he should try on the spot "which of our swords was the better."

He answered only by a glare of rage and a gesture to the archers, who instantly threw themselves into a half circle round me, with the expertness of proficients in the trade of justice, and bended their bows. Determined to resist to the last, I flung out upbraidings and scorn upon the murderer, which drove him to hide his head behind the troops. Another disturbance arose. Simitars waved, turbans shook, horses plunged; the deep order was broken, and at length a horseman, magnificently appareled and mounted, burst into the ring and looked fiercely round.

"What, you miscreants," he shouted, "who dares to take command out of my hands? Down with your bows! Commit murder and I not present! The first man that pulls a string shall leave an empty saddle. Draw off, cutthroats, or if you want to do the world a service, shoot one another."

A Meeting With the Captain

I seemed to remember the voice, but I gazed in vain on the splendid figure. The turban that, blazing with gems, hung down on his forehead, and the beard that, black as the raven's wing, curled full round his lip, completely baffled me. He looked at me in turn, thrust out a sinewy hand, and, clasping mine, exclaimed with a laugh laugh:

"Prince, does the plumage make you forget the bird? What can have brought you into the hands of my culprits? I thought that you were drowned, burned, or a candidate for the imperial diadem by this time."

I now knew him.

"My friend of the free-trade!" said I in a low tone.

He spoke in a fearless tone. "By no means. I have reformed—am a changed man—captain of the seas no more; but a loyal plunderer—in the service of Vespasian, and in command of a thousand Arab cavalry that will ride, run away, and rob with any corps in the service; and the word is a bold one."

Our brief conference was broken up by the return of Cestius, who, outrageous at the delay and coming to inquire the cause, found fresh fuel for his wrath in the sight of the Arab captain turned into my protector. With an execration he demanded "why his orders had been disobeyed."

The captain answered, with the most provoking coolness, that "no Roman officer, let his rank be what it might, was entitled to degrade the allies into executioners."

The Roman grew furious with the slight in the face of the troops, who highly enjoyed it. The Arab grew more sarcastic, till Cestius was rash enough to lift his hand, and the Arab anticipated the blow, by dashing his charger at him and leaving the general and his horse struggling together on the ground. An insult of this kind to the second in command was, of course, not to be forgiven. The Arabs bent their bows to make battle for their captain, but he forbade resistance; and when the legionary tribune demanded his sword, he surrendered it with a smile, saying that "he had done service enough for one day in saving an honest man and punishing a ruffian," and that he should justify himself to Titus alone.

The Approach of the Enemy

My fate was still undetermined. But the legionaries soon had more pressing matters to think of. The clangor of horns and shouts came in the direction of the city. The plain still lay in shade, but I could see through the dusk immense crowds moving forward like an inundation. The legions were instantly under arms, and I stood a chance of being walked over by two armies!

But I was not to encounter so distinguished a catastrophe. Some symptoms of my inclination to escape attracted the eye of the guard, and I was marched to the common repository of malefactors in the rear of the lines.

CHAPTER LVII

Onias, the Enemy of Salathiel

Within Sound of Battle

My new quarters were within the walls of one of those huge country mansions which the pride of our ancestors had built to be the plague of their posterity; for those the enemy chiefly employed for our prisons. Their solid strength defied desultory attack; time made little other impression on them than to picture their walls with innumerable stains; and the man must be a practised prison-breaker who could force his way out of their depths of marble. But if my eyes were useless, my ears had their full indulgence Every sound of the conflict was heard. The attack was furious, and must have often been close to the walls of my dungeon. The various rallying-cries of the tribes rang through its halls; then a Roman shout, and the heavy charge of the cavalry would roll along until, after an encountering roar and a long clashing of weapons, the tumult passed away, to be rapidly renewed by the obstinate bravery of my unfortunate countrymen.

I felt as a man and a leader must feel during scenes in which he ought to take a part, yet to which he is virtually as dead as the sleeper in the tomb. My life had been activity; my heart was in the cause; I had knowledge, zeal, and strength that might in the chances of battle turn the scale. I even often heard my name among the charging cries of the day. But here I lay within impassable barriers. A thousand times during those miserable hours I measured their height with my eye; then threw myself on the ground, and placing my hands over my ears, labored to exclude thought from my soul.

But my fellow prisoners were practical philosophers to a man; untaught in the schools, 'tis true, yet fully trained in

The Sons of Chance

that great academy worth all that Philosopy ever dreamed in—experience. In all my wanderings among mankind I never before had so ample an opportunity of studying variety of character. War is the hotbed that urges all our qualities, good and evil, into their broadest luxuriance. The generous become munificent; the mean darken into the villainous; and the rude harden into brutality. The camp is the great inn at which all the dubious qualities set up their rest, and a single campaign perfects the culprit to the height of his profession. There were round me in these immense halls about five hundred profligates, any one of whose histories would have been invaluable to a scorner of human nature.

Among the loose armies of the East those fellows exercised their vocation as regular appendages; often lived in luxury, and sometimes shot up into leaders themselves. But robbery in the Roman armies required master-hands. The temptation was strong, for the legionary was the grand ravager, and like the lion, he left the larger share of the prey to the jackal. Yet justice, inexorable and rapid, was his rule—in all cases but his own; and the jackal, suspected of trespassing within the legitimate distance from the superior savage, ran imminent hazard of being disqualified for all encroachment to come. Three-fourths of my associates had played this perilous game, and its penalties were now awaiting only the first leisure of the troops. Peace, at all times vexatious to their trade, had thus a double disgust for them, and the most patriotic son of Israel could not have taken a more zealous interest in the defeat of the legions.

But philosophy still predominated; if hope was at an end, hilarity took its place, and the prison rang with reckless exhibitions of practical glee, riotous songs, and mockeries. In the idleness of the lingering hours the professional talents of those sons of chance were brought into play. The mimic collected his audience, burlesqued the pompous officials of the army, and gathered his pence and plaudits as if he were under the open sky and could call his head his own. The nostrum-vender had his secrets for the cure of every ill, and harangued on the impotence of brand, scourge, and blade, if

the patient had but the wisdom to employ his irresistible unguent. The soothsayer sold fate at the lowest price, and fixed the casualties of the next four-and-twenty hours—an easy task with the principal part of his audience. The minstrel chanted the pleasures of a life unencumbered by care or conscience; and the pilferer, with but an hour to live, exercised his trade with an industry proportioned to the shortness of his time.

A victim of Ingratitude

In the whole gang I met with but one man thoroughly out of spirits. He had obviously been no favorite of fortune, for the human form could scarcely be less indebted to clothing. His swarthy visage was doubly blackened by hunger and exhaustion, and even his voice had a prison sound. Driven away from the joyous groups by the natural repulsion which the careless feel at visages that remind them of trouble, he took refuge in the corner where I lay, tormented by every echo of the battle. Not unwilling to forget the melancholy scenes in which every moment was draining the last blood of my country, I turned to the wretch beside me and asked the cause of his sorrows.

"Ingratitude," was the reply. "This is a villainous world; a man may spend his life in serving others, and what will he gain in the end? Nothing. There is, for instance, the prince of Damascus wallowing in wealth; yet the greatest rogue under this roof has not a more pitiful stock of honor. Witness his conduct to me. He was out of favor with his uncle, the late prince; was not worth more than the raiment on his limbs, and as likely to finish his days on the gibbet as any of the knot of robbers that helped him to scour the roads about Sidon. In his distress he applied to me. I had driven a handsome share of the free-trade between Egypt and the north, and now and then gave him a handsome price for his booty. The idea of bringing his uncle to terms was out of the question. I named my price; it was allowed to be fair. I made my way into the palace, was exalted to the honors of cupbearer, and on my first night of office gave the old man a cup which cured him of drunkenness forever. And what do you think was my reward?"

Salathiel's Interest Roused

"I could name what it ought to have been."

"You conclude half the old man's jewels at the least. No; not a stone—not a shekel. I was thrown into chains, and finally kicked out of the city, with a promise, the only one that he will ever keep, that if I venture there again I shall leave it without my head! There's gratitude! There's honor for you!

"My next example," he continued, "was among the Romans. It must be owned that they pay well for secret services. But then, ingratitude infects them from top to toe. I had been three years in their employment, and if I made free with a few of their secrets in favor of others, it was only on the commercial principle of having as many customers as one can supply; still, I helped them to the knowledge of all that was going on."

He had found a listener, and indulged his recollection; after a variety of events, in which he cheated everybody, he came to one that had some interest for myself.

"At last a showy adventurer changed the scene," he continued. "Some insult had stirred up his blood, and in revenge he sailed away with the prefect's galley and set up on his own account. Not a sail, from a shallop to a trireme, could touch the water from the Cyclades to Cyprus without being overhauled by the captain. I was set by the prefect upon his track, and got into his good graces by lending him a little of my information, of which he made such desperate use that the Roman swore my destruction as a traitor. To make up the quarrel I tried a wider game, and was bringing his fleet upon the pirates in their very nest when ill luck came across me. A pair whom to the last hour of my life nothing will persuade me to think anything but demons, sent expressly to do me mischief, spoiled one of the finest inventions that ever came into the head of man.

"The consequence was that the pirates, instead of being attacked, burned the Roman's trireme round him, and would have burned himself, if he had not thought a watery end better than a fiery one, leaped overboard, and gone straight to the bottom. The whole blame fell upon me, and my only pay-

ment was the cropping of my ears and a declaration, sworn to in the names of Romulus and Remus, that if I ever ventured again within a Roman camp I should not get off so well. Ingratitude again! Never was a man so unfortunate."

Salathiel becomes a foil

"Quite the contrary. It appears to me that seldom was man so lucky. If one in a hundred would have your tale to tell, not one in a thousand would have lived to tell it." I had already recognized the Egyptian of the cavern.

"But justice, honor!"

"Say no more about them. Whatever the Romans may be in the matter of justice, your case is an answer to all charges on their mercy."

He looked at me with a ghastly grimace, and as he threw back the long and squalid locks that covered his countenance, showed what beggary had done to the sleek features of the once superbly clothed and jeweled sea-rover.

"But what," said I, "threw a man of your virtue among such a gang of caitiffs as are here?"

"Another instance of ingratitude. I had been for twenty years connected with one of the leading men of Jerusalem, and I will say that in my experience of mankind I have known no individual less perplexed with weakness of conscience. He had a difficult game to play between the Romans, whom he served privately, the Jews, whom he served publicly, and himself, whom he served with at least as much zeal as either of his employers. The times were made for the success of a man who has his eyes open and suffers neither the fear of anything on earth nor the hope of anything after it to shut them. He succeeded accordingly; got rid of some rivals by the dagger; sent others to the dungeon; bribed where money would answer his purpose; threatened where threats would be current coin; and by the practise of those natural means of rising in public affairs, became the hope of a faction. But on his glory there was one cloud—the prince of Naphtali!"

I listened attentively. I had deeply known the early hostility of Onias, but his devices were too tortuous for me to trace, and until the past night I had lost sight of him for

Onias and His Rival

years. I asked what cause of bitterness existed between those personages.

"A hundred, as generally happens where the imagination becomes a party and the accuser is the judge. The prince in his youth and before he attained his rank had the insolence to fall in love with the woman marked by Onias for his own. He had the additional insolence to win her; and the completion of his crimes was marriage. Onias thenceforth swore his ruin. Public convulsions put off the promise, and while he was driven to his last struggle to keep himself among the living, he had the angry indulgence of seeing the young husband shoot up without any trouble into rank, wealth, and renown."

"But has not time blunted his hostility?" I asked.

"Time, as the proverb goes, blunts nothing but a man's wit, his teeth, and his good intentions," said the knave, with a sneer on his grim visage. "The next half of the proverb is that it sharpens wine, women, and wickedness. What Onias may have been doing of late I can only guess; but unless he is changed by miracle, he has been dealing in every villainous contrivance from subornation to sorcery. I had my own affairs to mind. But unless Satan owes him a grudge, he is now not far from his revenge."

I thought of our meeting at the city gates, and alarmed at the chance of his discovering my family, anxiously asked whether Onias had obtained any late knowledge of his rival.

"Of that I know but little," said he; "yet quick as his revenge may be, unless my honest employer manages with more temper than usual, he will rue the hour when he set foot on the track of the prince of Naphtali. If ever man possessed the mastery of the spirits that our wizards pretend to raise, the prince is that man. I myself have hunted him for years, yet he always baffled me. I have laid traps for him that nothing in human cunning could have escaped, yet he broke through them as if they were spider's webs. I saw him sent to the thirstiest lover of blood that ever sat on a throne. Yet he came back, aye, from the very clutch of Nero. I maddened his friends against him, and he contrived to escape even from

the malice of his friends, a matter which you will own is among the most memorable. I had him plunged into a dungeon, where I kept him alive for certain reasons, while Onias was to be kept to his bargain by the prisoner's reappearance. Yet he escaped, and my last intelligence of him is that he is at this moment living in pomp in Jerusalem, the spot where I have been for the last month in close pursuit of him. Time or some marvelous power must have disguised him. And yet if I were to meet him this night——" A Confession Fear

"Look on me, slave!" I exclaimed, and grasping him by the throat unsheathed my dagger. "You have found him, and to your cost. Villain! it is to you then that I owe so much misery. Make your peace with Heaven if you can, for it would be a crime to suffer you to leave this spot alive."

He was dumb with terror. I held him with an iron grasp. The thought that if he escaped me, it must be only to let loose a murderer against my house, made me feel his death an act of justice.

"Let me go," he at last muttered; "let me live; I am not fit to die. In the name of that Lord whom you worship, spare me!" He fell at my feet in desperate supplication. "You have not heard all; I have abjured your enemy. Spare me and I will swear to pass my days in the desert, never to come again before the face of man; to lie upon the rock, to live upon the weed, to drink of the pool until I sink into the grave!"

I paused in disgust at the abject eagerness for life in a wretch self-condemned! While I held the dagger before him, his senses continued bound up by fear. He gazed on it with an eye that quivered with every quivering of the steel. With one hand he grasped my uplifted arm as he knelt, and with the other gathered his rags round his throat to cover it from the blow. His voice was lost in horrid gaspings; his mouth was wide open and livid. I sheathed the weapon, and his countenance instantly returned into its old grimace. A ghastly smile grew upon it as he now drew from his bosom a small packet.

Salathiel's Hold upon Onias

"If you had put me to death," said the wretch, "you would have lost your best friend. This packet contains a correspondence for which Onias would give all that he is worth in the world; and well he might, for the man who has it in his hands has his life. The world is made up of ingratitude. After all my services—slandering here, plundering there, hunting down his opponents in every direction, till they either put themselves out of the world or he saved them the trouble—he had the baseness to throw me off. At the head of his troops he kicked me from his horse's side, ordering me to be turned loose, 'to carry my treachery to the Romans, if they should be fools enough to think me worth the hire.' I took him at his word. I was watching my opportunity to enter Jerusalem and stab him to the heart when I was taken by some of the plunderers that hover round the camp, and am now probably to suffer for the benefit of Roman morality, as a robber and assassin, as soon as the legions shall have murdered every man and robbed every mansion in Jerusalem."

The packet contained a correspondence of Onias with the Romans. A sensation of triumph glowed through me—I held the fate of my implacable enemy in my hand. I could now, with a word, strike to the earth the being whose artifices and cruelties had waylaid me through life, and the traitor to my country would perish by the same blow that avenged my own wrongs. My nature was made for passion. In love and hatred, in ambition, in revenge, my original spirit knew no bounds. Time, sorrow, and the conviction of my own outcast state had partially softened those hazardous impulses, and I found the value of adversity. Misfortune comes with healing on its wings to the burning temper of the heart, as the tempest comes to the arid soil; it tears up the surface, but softens it for the seeds of the nobler virtues; even in its feeblest work, it cools the withering and devouring heat for a time. I had yet to find with what fatal rapidity the heart gives way to its old overwhelming temptations.

"I spare your life," said I, "but on one condition—that you henceforth make Onias the constant object of your vigilance; that you keep him from all injury to me and mine; and

that when I shall seize him at last, you shall be forthcoming to give public proof of his treachery." The Power of Gold

"This sounds well," said the Egyptian as he cast his eyes round the lofty hall, "but it would sound better if we were not on this side of the gate. All the talking in the world will not sink these walls an inch, nor make that gate turn on its hinges, tho for that, and for every other too, there is one master-key. Happy was the time"—and the fellow's sullen eye lighted up with the joy of knavery—"when I could walk through every cabinet, chamber, and cell from the Emperor's palace in Rome down to the Emperor's dungeon in Cæsarea."

I produced a few coins which I had been enabled to conceal, and flung them into his hand. The sum rekindled life in him; avarice has its enthusiasts as well as superstition. He forgot danger, prison, and even my dagger at the sight of his idol. He turned the coins to the light in all possible ways; he tried them with his teeth; he tasted, he kissed, he pressed them to his bosom. Never was lover more rapturous than this last of human beings at the touch of money in the midst of wretchedness and ruin. His transports taught me a lesson, and in that prison and from that slave of vice I learned long to tremble at the power of gold over the human mind.

It was past midnight and the noise of the criminals round me had already sunk away. The floor was strewn with sleepers, and the only waking figure was the sentinel as he trod wearily along the passages, when the Egyptian, desiring me to feign sleep that his further operations might not be embarrassed, drew himself along the ground toward him. The soldier, a huge Dacian, covered with beard and iron, and going his rounds with the insensibility of a machine, all but trod upon the Egyptian, who lay crouching and writhing before him. I saw the spear lifted up and heard a growl that made me think my envoy's career at an end in this world. He still lay on the ground, writhing under the sentinel's foot, as a serpent might under the paw of a lion.

I was about to spring up and interpose, but his time was not yet come. The spear hung in air, gradually turned its point upward, and finally resumed its seat of peace on the

The Sentinel Bribed

Dacian's shoulder. That art of persuasion which speaks to the palm and whose language is of all nations had touched the son of Thrace; I heard the sound of the coin on the marble; a few words arranged the details. The sentinel discovered that his vigilance was required in another direction, broke off his customary round, and walked away. The Egyptian turned to me with a triumphant smile on his hideous visage, the gate rolled on its hinge, and he slipped out like a shadow.

At the instant my mind misgave me. I had put the fate of my family into the hands of a slave, destitute of even the pretense of principle. In my eagerness to save, might I not have been delivering them up to their enemy? He had sold Onias to me; might he not make his peace by selling me to Onias? The gate was still open. A few steps would put me beyond bondage. Yet I had come to claim Esther. If I left the camp, what hope was there of my ever seeing this child of my heart again? Would not every hour of my life be embittered by the chance that she might be suffering the miseries of a dungeon, or borne away into a strange land, or dying and calling on her father for help in vain?

Those contending impulses passed through my mind with the speed and almost with the agony of an arrow. The more I thought of the Egyptian, the more I took his treachery for certain. But the present ruin of all predominated over the possible sufferings of one, and with a heart throbbing almost to suffocation and a step scarcely able to move I dragged myself toward the portal.

CHAPTER LVIII

Eleazar the Convert

I WAS not to escape! As I reached the gate a loud sound of trampling feet and many voices drove me back. By that curious texture of the feelings which prefers suffering to suspense I was almost glad to have the question decided for me by fortune, and flung myself on the ground among a heap of the undone, who lay enjoying a slumber that might be envied by thrones. The gate was thrown open and in another moment in burst a living mass of horror, a multitude of beings in whom the human face and form were almost obliterated; shapes gaunt with famine, black with dust, withered with deadly fatigue, and covered with gashes and gore. The War Exterminat

The war had gone on from cruelty to cruelty. To the Roman the Jew was a rebel, and he had a rebel's treatment; to the Jew the Roman was a tyrant, and dearly was the price of his tyranny exacted. Quarter was seldom given on either side. The natural generosity of the son of Vespasian had attempted for a while to soften this furious system. But the slaughter of the mission exasperated him; he declared the Jews a people incapable of faith, and proclaimed a war of extermination. The battle of the day had furnished the first opportunity of sweeping vengeance.

The people, stimulated by the arrival of Onias, had made a desperate effort to force the Roman lines. The attacks were reiterated with more than valor—with rage and madness; the Jews fought with a disregard of life that appalled and had nearly overwhelmed even the Roman steadiness. The loss of the legions was formidable; all their chief officers were wounded, many were killed. Titus himself, leading a column from the Decuman gate of the camp, was wounded by a blow from a sling; and the state of its ramparts, as I saw them at

Salathiel among the Wounded

daybreak, torn down in immense breaches, and filling up the ditch with their ruins, showed the imminent hazard of the whole army. Another hour of daylight would probably have been its ruin. But Judea would not have been the more secure, for the factions, relieved from the presence of an enemy, would have torn each other to pieces.

The loss of the Jews was so prodigious" as to be accounted for only by their eagerness to throw away life. Not less than a hundred thousand corpses lay between the camp and Jerusalem. No prisoners were taken on either side, and the crowds that now approached were the wounded, gathered off the field, to be crucified in memory of the mission. The coming of those victims put an end to the possibility or the desire of sleep.

The immense and gloomy hall, one of those in use for the stately banquets customary among the leaders of Jerusalem, was suddenly a blaze of torches. The malefactors and captives were thrown together in heaps, guarded by strong detachments of spearmen that lined the sides, like ranges of iron statues, overlooking the mixed and moving confusion of wretched life between. Guilt, sorrow, and shame were there in their dreadful undisguise. The roof rang to oaths and screams of pain as the wounded tossed and rolled upon each other; rang to bitter lamentation, and more bitter still, to those self-accusing outcries which the near approach of violent death sometimes awakens in the most daring criminals. For stern as the justice was, it still was justice; the Jewish character had fearfully changed. Rapine and bloodshed had become the habits of the populace, and among the panting and quivering wretches before me begging a moment of life I recognized many a face that, seen in Jerusalem, was the sign of plunder and massacre.

Repulsive as my recollections were, I spent the greater part of the night in bandaging their wounds and relieving the thirst which scarcely less than their wounds wrung them. There were women, too, among those wrecks of the sword, and now that the frenzy of the day was past, they exhibited a picture of the most heart-breaking dejection. Lying on the

ground wounded and with every lineament of their former selves disfigured, they cried from that living grave alternately for vengeance and for mercy. Then tearing their hair and flinging it, as their last mark of hatred and scorn, at the legionaries, they devoted them to ruin in the name of the God of Israel. Then passion gave way to pain, and in floods of tears they called on the names of parent, husband, and child, whom they were to see no more! The fury the Condem

It was known that at daybreak the prisoners were to die, and the din of hammers and the creaking of wagons bearing the crosses broke the night with horrid intimation. At length the stillness terribly told that all was prepared. The night, measured by moments, seemed endless, and many a longing was uttered for the dawn that was to put them out of their misery. Yet when the first gray light fell through the casements and the trumpets sounded for the escort to get under arms, nothing could exceed the fury of the crowd. Some rushed upon the spears of the reluctant soldiery; some bounded in mad antics through the hall; others fell on their knees and offered up horrid and shuddering prayers; many flung themselves upon the floor, and in the paroxysm of wrath and fear perished.

Shocked and sickened by this misery, I withdrew from the gate, where the tumult was thickest, as the soldiery were already driving them out, and returned to my old lair, to await the will of fortune. But I found it occupied. A circle of the wounded were standing round a speaker, to whom they listened with singular attention. The voice caught my ear; from the crowd round him I was unable to observe his features, but once drawn within the sound of his words, I shared the general interest in their extraordinary power. He was a teacher of the new religion.

In my wanderings through Judea I had often met with those Nazarenes. Their doctrines had a vivid simplicity that might have attracted my attention as a philosopher, but philosophy was cold to their power. The splendor and strength of their preaching realized the boldest traditions of oratory. Yet their triumph was not that of oratory; they dis-

The Teachers of Christianity

claimed all pretension to eloquence or learning, declaring that even if they possessed them, they dared not sully by human instruments of success the glory due to Heaven. They carried this self-denial to the singular extent of divulging every circumstance calculated to deprive themselves and their doctrines of popularity. They openly acknowledged that they were of humble birth and occupation, sinners like the rest of mankind, and in some instances guilty of former excesses of blind zeal, persecutors of the new religion, even to blood. Of their Master they spoke with the same openness. They told of His humble origin, His career of rejection, and His death by the punishment of a slave. To the scoffer at their hopes of a kingdom to be given by the sufferer of that ignominious death, they unhesitatingly answered that their hope was founded expressly upon His death, and that they lived and rejoiced in the expectation that they were, like Him, to seal their faith with their blood!

I had often seen enthusiasm among my countrymen, but this was a spirit of a distinct and a loftier birth. It had the vigor of enthusiasm without its rashness; the gentleness of infancy, with the wisdom of years; the solemn reverence of the Jew for the divine Will, free from his jealous claims to the sole possession of truth. The Law and the Prophets were perpetually in their hands, and they often embarrassed our haughty doctors and acrid Pharisees with questions and interpretations to which no reply could be returned but a sneer or an anathema. But in the power of conviction, in the master art of striking the heart and understanding with sudden light, like the bolt from heaven, I never heard, I never shall hear, their equals. To call it eloquence was to humiliate this stupendous gift; the most practised skill of the rhetorician gave way before it, like gossamer, like chaff before the whirlwind. It broke its way through sophistry by the mere weight of thought. It had a rapid reality that swept the hearer along. In its disdain of the mere decorations of speech, in the bold and naked nerve of its language, there was an irresistible energy—the energy of the tempest, giving proof in its untamable rushings of its descent from a region beyond the

reach of man. I never listened to one of these preachers but with a consciousness that he was the depository of mighty knowledge. He had the whole mystery of the human affections bare to his eye. Among a thousand hearts one word sent conviction at the same instant. All their diversities of feeling, sorrow, and error were shaken at once by that universal language. It talked to the soul!

Of these overwhelming appeals, which often lasted for hours together and to which I listened overwhelmed, nothing is left to posterity but a few fragments, and those letters which the Christians still preserve among their sacred writings—great productions and giving all the impression that it is possible to transmit to the future. But the living voice, the illumined countenance, the frame glowing and instinct with inspiration!—what can transmit them?

"Here," said I, as I often stood and heard their voices thundering over the multitude, "here is the true power that is to shake the temples of heathenism. Here is a new element come to overthrow or to renovate the world."

I saw our holy law struggling to keep itself in existence, compressed on every side by idolatry; a little fountain feebly urging its way through its native rocks, but exhausted and dried up at the moment it reached the plain. But here was an ocean, an inexhaustible depth and breadth of power made to roll round the world, and be, at the will of Providence, the illimitable instrument of its bounty. I saw our holy law feebly sheltering under its despoiled and insulted ordinances the truth of Heaven. But here was a religion scorning a narrower temple than the earth and the heaven!

Yet I turned away from those convictions. A thousand times I was on the point of throwing myself at the feet of the men who bore this transcendent gift and asking: "What shall I do?" A thousand times I could have cried out: "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." But oh, my doubting heart! I make no attempt to account for myself or my career—I have felt as strongly driven back as if there were an actual hand forcing me away. The illusion was a willing one, and it was suffered, like all such, to hold me in

'The Hour is Come"

its captivity. But even when I shrank away I have said: "Whence had those men this knowledge? If angels from God were to come down to reclaim the world, could they tell us things different or tell us more?"

I looked round upon the labors of ancient wisdom, and I saw how trivial a space its utmost vigor had cleared, and how soon even that space was overrun by the rankness of the world, and I said: "Here is the central fire, the mighty reservoir of light, awaiting but the divine command to burst up in splendor, consume the impurities of the world at once, and regenerate mankind." But the veil was upon my face. I labored against conviction, and shutting out the subject from my thoughts, sternly determined to live and die in the faith of my fathers.

I now heard but the few and simple closing words of the speaker in this group of the devoted. He was sorrowful that the Gospel had been so long committed to his hands in vain. He had, through fear of his own inadequacy, and in the remaining deference to the prejudices of his people, suffered the truth to decay, and seen the illustrious labors of the apostles without following their example.

"But," said he, "I was rebuked; the opportunity once neglected was refused even to my prayers. I was thenceforth in perils, in civil war, in domestic sedition. I am but now come from a dungeon. But in my bonds it pleased Him, in whose hand are the heavens, to visit me. I knelt and prayed, acknowledging my sin, and beseeching Him that before I died I might proclaim His truth before Israel. In that hour came a voice, bidding me go forth; and lo! my chains fell from my hands and I went forth. And when I came to the gates of the dungeon, I willed to go forward to the city of David. But I was forbidden, and my steps were turned here, to awake my brethren to knowledge before they perish."

The trumpets rang again as a new crowd were drained off to execution. My heart sank at the melancholy sound, but among the converts there was not a murmur.

"Kneel," said the preacher; "the hour is come!"

They knelt and he poured out his spirit aloud in prayer.

"Now go forth," he said, rising alone, "go forth, redeemed of the Lord. This night have ye known that He is gracious. Those things that God before hath shown by the mouth of all His prophets that Christ should suffer, He hath fulfilled. But ye have heard, but ye have been converted, that your sins may be blotted out when the times of refreshing shall come. But ye have been called—but ye have been justified—but ye shall be glorified. Our hope of you is stedfast—knowing that as you have been partakers of His cross, so shall ye be of His kingdom. Now be grace unto you, and peace from the King of Kings!"

He laid his hands upon the kneeling converts and went slowly round, blessing them. His face had been hitherto turned from me, and I was too much impressed by his words and the awful circumstances in which he stood even to conjecture who he was. At length in moving round he came before me. To my inexpressible surprise and sorrow the teacher was Eleazar! I had lost every trace of him since we parted in the fortress, and with sorrow of heart had concluded him a sacrifice to the common atrocities of our ferocious war. His long absence was now explained, but no explanation could account for the extraordinary change that had been wrought upon his countenance. Always generous and manly, yet the softness of a nature made for domestic life had concealed the vigor of his understanding. He was the general reconciler in the disputes of the neighboring districts, the impartial judge, the unwearied friend, and his features had borne the stamp of this quiet career.

But the man before me bore uncontrollable energy in every tone and feature. The failing flame of the torch that burned over his head was enough to show the transformation of his countenance into grandeur; his glance was a living fire; the hair that floated over it, changed by captivity to the whiteness of snow, shaded a forehead that seemed to have suddenly expanded into majesty. If I had met such a man in a desert, I should have augured in him the founder or the subverter of a throne.

While I stood absolutely awed by his presence, a cohort of

"Go to the Kingdom of Glory"

spearmen poured in to gather up the gleanings of the hall. Then was renewed the scene of misery. Wretches whom I had thought dead started from the ground and flung themselves at their feet, or rushed against the ranks, tore the weapons out of their hands, and broke them in fury through the hall. Others dashed their foreheads against the walls and floor and died upon the spot. Others sprang up the projections of the sculpture and climbed with the agility of leopards to the roof, to force the casements. But additional troops poured in, and the crowd were overwhelmed and driven out to undergo their destiny.

During this long tumult, the Christian converts continued kneeling and evidently absorbed by thoughts that extinguished fear. Even the sounds from without, that terribly told what was going on, and every tone of which pierced me to the heart, produced only a deeper supplication that light would be given to the souls of the sufferers. This patience probably induced the soldiery to leave them to the last, while they drove out the more untractable at the point of the spear, like cattle to the slaughter. I still stood aloof. The sacredness of the moments that came before death were not to be interrupted. The transformed Eleazar had already passed away from the things of this world. I would not force them on him again, nor vainly and cruelly disturb the holy serenity of one at peace alike with man and Heaven.

At length the order came.

"Now, my beloved brothers, beloved in the Lord, go forth," said Eleazar, with a noble exultation glowing in his countenance, "quit ye like men; be strong; fear not them who can kill only the body. Even this night saw you still in your sins—the wisdom that was before all worlds, hidden from you. But He that calleth light out of darkness hath wrought in you. He hath poured upon you that Spirit which is an earnest of your inheritance, holy, incorruptible, eternal in the heavens. Now, sons of Abraham, redeemed of Christ, kings and priests of God forever, go where He is gone to prepare a place for you—go to the house of many mansions—go to the kingdom of glory!"

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"Now, my beloved brothers, beloved in the Lord, go forth," said Eleazar.

See page 452.

With tears and blessings Eleazar took water and baptized the converts. They sang a hymn, and then rising, moved toward the gate, the soldiers standing at a distance and looking on at this more than heroic resignation with eyes of respect and wonder. Salathiel fronti

I could restrain myself no longer. I grasped Eleazar; he instantly recognized me, and the color that shot through his cheek showed that with me came a tide of memory. I was speechless; I embraced him; tears of old friendship dimmed my eyes. He was overpowered like myself, and could only exclaim:

"Salathiel, my brother! What misfortune has brought you here? Where is Miriam? Where are your children? You can not be a prisoner? Fly from this dreadful place!"

"Never, my brother, unless I can save you. The tyrants shall have the curse of both upon their heads."

"This is madness, Salathiel—impiety! Oh, that you were this moment even as I am—in all but death! It is your duty to live; you have many ties to the world."

He paused, and with a look upward said in a tone of prayer:

"Oh, that you were at this moment awake to the truths, the holy and imperishable consolations, that make the cross to me more triumphant than a throne!"

The theme was a painful one. He instantly saw my perturbation and forebore to urge me; but fixing his humid eyes on heaven, and with uplifted hands, he gave me his parting benediction.

"May the time come," said he, "when the veil shall be taken away from the face of my unhappy kindred and of my undone country! When the days of the desolation of Israel come to be accomplished, let her kneel before the altar!—let her weep in sackcloth and repent of her iniquities; so shall the sun of glory arise upon her once more."

Then, as if a flash of knowledge had darted into his soul, he fixed his solemn gaze on me.

"Salathiel, you are not fit to die; pray that you may not now sink into the grave. You have fierce impulses, of whose power you have yet no conception. Supplicate for length of

A Day of Brightness

years; rather endure all the miseries of exile; be al
the earth—weary, wild, and desolate; but pray that
not die until you know the truths that Israel yet sh
Let it be for me to die, and seal my faith by my blo
it be for you to live, and seal it by your penitence.
in hope. Even on earth, a day bright beyond earthly
lovely beyond all the visions of beauty, magnificent
erful beyond the loftiest thought of human natu
come, and we, even we, my brother, shall on ea
again."

CHAPTER LIX

The Clemency of Titus

THERE was a thrilling influence in the words of Eleazar that left me without reply, and for a while I stood absorbed. When I raised my eyes again, I saw him following the melancholy train down the valley of slaughter. I rushed after him. He would not listen to my entreaties; he would suffer no ransom to be offered for his life. I supplicated the tribune of the escort for a moment's delay until I could solicit mercy from Titus. The officer, himself deeply pained by the service on which he was ordered, had no authority, but sent a centurion with me to the general commanding.

I hurried my guide through the immense force drawn up to witness the offering to the shades of the Roman senators and soldiers. The morning was stormy, and clouds covering the ridges of the hills darkened the feeble dawn so much that torches were necessary to direct the movement of the troops. The wind came howling through the spears and standards, but with it came the fiercer sounds of human agony. As we reached the entrance of the valley, the centurion pointed to a height where the general stood in the midst of a group of mounted officers, wrapped in their cloaks against the snows that came furiously whirling from the hills. I darted up the steep with a rapidity that left my companion far below, and implored the Roman humanity for my countrymen and for my noble and innocent brother.

On my knee, that I had never before bowed to man, I besought the muffled form, whom I took for the illustrious son of Vespasian, to spare men "whose only crime was that of having defended their country." I adjured the heir of the empire "to rescue from an ignominious fate, subjects driven

into revolt only by violences which he would be the first to disown."

"If," exclaimed I, "you demand money for the lives of my countrymen, it shall be given even to our last ounce of silver; if you would have territory, we will give up our lands and go forth exiles. If you must have life for life, take mine, and let my brother go free!"

The form slowly removed the cloak and Cestius was before me.

"So," said he, with a malignant smile, "you can kneel, Jew, and play the rhetorician; however, as you are here, your having escaped me once is no reason why you should laugh at justice a second time. Here, Torquatus," he beckoned to a centurion, "take this rebel to the crosses and bring me an account of the way in which he behaves. You see, Jew, that I have some care of your reputation. A fellow careless as you are would probably have died like a slave in a skirmish; but you shall now figure before your countrymen as a patriot should, and die with the honors of a native rebel."

I disdained to answer. The officer came up, attended by his spearmen, and I was led down to the valley. A storm of extraordinary violence, long gathering on the sky, broke forth as I descended, and it was only by grasping the rocks and shrubs on the side of the declivity that we could avoid being blown away. We staggered along, blinded, and half frozen. The storm fell heavily upon the legions, and the heights were quickly abandoned for the shelter of the valley. The valley itself was a sheet of snow, torn up by blasts that drifted it hazardously upon the troops and threw everything into confusion. But the sight that opened on me as I passed the first gorge effaced storm and soldiery, and might have effaced the world, from my mind. Through the whole extent of the naked and rocky hollow were planted crosses. The ravine, dark even in sunshine, was now black as midnight, and its only light was from the scattered torches and the fires into which the bodies of the victims were flung as they died, to make room for others. On those crosses hung hundreds, writhing in miseries made only to show the hideous capability of suffering that

exists in our frame. I was instantly recognized, and many a hand was stretched out to me imploring that I should mercifully hasten death. I heard my name called on as their prince, their leader, their countryman; I heard voices calling on me to remember and revenge! Horror-struck, I raved at the legionaries and their tyrant master until I sank upon the ground in exhaustion, covering my head with my mantle that I might exclude alike sight and sound.

A voice at my side aroused me; a cross had just been fixed on the spot, and at its foot stood, preparing for death, the man who had spoken. I looked upon his face and gave an involuntary cry. For seven-and-thirty years I had not seen that face; but I had seen it on a NIGHT never to be erased from my remembrance or my soul! I knew every feature of it through all the changes of years!

Manhood had passed into age; the bold and sanguine countenance was furrowed with cares and crimes. But I knew at once the man who had on that night been foremost at my call; the daring rabble-leader who had first shouted at my fatal summons, and maddened the multitude, as I had maddened myself and him. He turned his glance upon me at the cry. His pale visage grew black as death. The past flashed upon his soul. He shook from head to foot with keen convulsion. He gasped and tried to speak, but no words came. He beat his breast wildly and pointed to the cross with dreadful meaning. The executioner, a brutal slave, scoffed at him as a dastard. He heard nothing, but with his pallid eyes staring on me and his hand pointed upward, stood stiffening. Life departed as he stood! The executioner, impatient, laid his grasp upon him, but he was beyond the power of man. He fell backward like a pillar of stone!

I started from the corpse, and utterly unnerved, looked wildly round for some way of escape from this scene of despair. As I tried to penetrate the dusk toward the bottom of the valley, Eleazar was seen at the head of his little band, standing at the foot of a cross, surrounded by soldiers. I thought no more of safety, and plunging into the valley, forced my way through the rocks and snowdrifts until I reached the

ws from Rome

foot of the declivity on which this true hero was about to die. But there an impenetrable fence of spears stopped me. I implored, execrated, struggled; Eleazar's look fell on me, and the smile on his uplifted countenance showed at once how much he thanked me and how calmly he was prepared to bid the world farewell. My struggles were useless, and I had but one resource more. I flew with a swiftness that baffled pursuit to the camp; passed the entrenchments by the breaches left since the battle, and before I could be stopped or questioned, entered the tent of Titus.

The supper-lamps were burning, and three stately-looking men still lingered over the table, one of the few unpopular luxuries of the general. A large packet of letters was being distributed by a page, and while I stood in the shade of the tent-curtain a moment, until I should ascertain whether Titus was among the three, I was made the unwilling sharer of the secrets of Rome.

"All is going on well," said one of the readers; "here, that truest of courtiers, my showy friend, Statilius, sends, compiled by his own hand, an endless list of the pomps and processions, games and congratulations, in the Emperor's progress through Italy. The intelligence is not the newest in the world, but it would break my courtly friend's heart to think that he had not the happiness of giving it first. So let him think, and so let him worship the rising sun, until another dynasty comes, and he discovers that if this sun has risen in the East, a much finer one may rise in the West. Thus runs the world."

"War with the Britons," read another; "they have marched a hundred of their naked clans from the hills. The remnant of the Druids are busy again with their incantations, and it is more than suspected that the whole is stirred up by our incomparable governor of western Gaul, who affects the diadem, like all the ridiculous governors of the age."

"Well then, he shall have his wish," said a third, "the Emperor will give him, of course, a court fit for a rebel: his council, lictors; and his palace, the Mamertine. But as to the Britons, I doubt if they care one of their own leather

pence whether he wears the diadem or the halter. The sav- A Letter from Sempro
ages have probably been vexed by some new attempt to squeeze money from them—the quickest way to try the national sensibilities. They have the spirit of trade in them already, and are as keen in the barter of their wolf-skins and bulls'-hides as if they supplied the world with Tyrian canopies and Indian pearls."

"A letter from Sempronius!" was the next topic; "its exquisite intaglio and elaborate perfumes would betray it all the world over; full of scandals, as usual, and full of discontent. He seems quite dismantled, and complains that—the sex is growing ugly, the seasons comfortless, and mankind dull; a certain sign that my emptiest of friends and the best dresser in Italy is growing old."

"So much the better for his circle," said another, sipping his goblet. "As for himself, while he can flourish in curls and calumny, he will be happy, the true man of high life, a prey to tailors, a figure for actors to burlesque, and an inveterate weariness to the world."

"But here is a private despatch from the Emperor, and, unfortunately for human eyes, written in his own most unreadable hand."

The speaker stood up to the lamp and gave me an opportunity of observing him. His countenance and figure struck me as what no other word could express than—princely.[46] The features were handsome and strongly marked Italian, and the form, tho tending to breadth and rather under the usual stature, was eminently dignified. His voice, too, was remarkable. I never heard one that more completely united softness and majesty. Here I could have but the shadow of a doubt that I had found Titus; yet I had that shadow. Our meeting in the field, where we had fought hand to hand, gave me no recollection of the man before me. Titus might not even be among the three, and nothing but seizure and ruin could be the consequence of discovering myself to subordinates.

"Good news, it is to be hoped," said both the listeners together as they deferentially watched his perusal.

"None whatever; a mere private chronicle in the Emperor's

ıtbiel Ap- usual style; all kinds of oddities together. He laughs at me
to Titus for complaining of the want of intelligence from Rome, and says that unless we send him some, the politicians of the city will die of emptiness or raise a rebellion; and that he is the most ill-used personage in the empire in being obliged to supply brains for so many blockheads and keep up the reputation of an honest man in the midst of so many knaves. But he mentions, and for that I am deeply grateful, that he has just erected the golden statue, which I vowed so long ago to the memory of my unfortunate friend Britannicus, and is about to dedicate a bronze equestrian one to me, to be placed in the Circus. He concludes the epistle by saying that unless the British insurrection speedily blows over, he shall be a beggar, and must turn tribune for a livelihood; defends his impracticable manuscript, which, he says, I am imitating as fast as I can, and repeats his old jest, that if I were not born to be a prince and an idler, I might have made my bread by my talents for forgery."

His hearers repaid the imperial merriment by its full tribute of loyal laughter.

Doubt was now at an end, and I advanced. My step roused the party, and they started up, drawing their swords. But the quick eye of Titus recognized me, and satisfying his companions by a gesture, I heard him pronounce to them: "My antagonist, the prince of Naphtali."

There was no time for ceremony, and I addressed him at once.

"Son of Vespasian, you are a soldier, and know what is due to the brave. I come to solicit your mercy; it is the first time that I ever stooped to solicit man. My brother, a chieftain of Israel, is in your hands, condemned to the horrid death of the cross; he is virtuous, brave, and noble; save him, and you will do an act of justice more honorable to your name than the bloodiest victory."

Titus looked at me in silence, and was evidently perplexed; then he returned to his chair, and having consulted with his companions, hesitatingly said:

"Prince, you know not what you have asked. I am bound,

like others, by the Emperor's commands, and they strictly are, that none of your countrymen, taken after the offer of peace, must live." The Offer of Titus

"Hear this, God of Israel!" I cried; "King of Vengeance, hear and remember!"

"You are rash, prince," said Titus gravely; "yet I can forgive your national temper. With others, even your venturing here might bring you into hazard. But the perfidy of your people makes truce and treaty impossible. They leave me no alternative. I lament the necessity. It is the desire of the illustrious Vespasian to reign in peace. But this is now at an end."

He paused, and advancing toward me, offered his hand with the words: "I know that there are brave and high-minded men among your nation. I have been astonished at the valor, nay, I will call it the daring and heroic contempt of suffering and death, that this siege has already shown. I have been witness, too," and he smiled, "of the prince of Naphtali's prowess in the field, and I would most willingly have such among my friends."

I waited for the conclusion.

"Why not come among us," he said; "give up a resistance that must end in ruin; abandon a cause that all the world sees to be desperate; save yourself from popular caprice, the violence of your rancorous factions, and the final fall of your city? Be Cæsar's friend, and name what possession, power, or rank you will."

The thought of deserting the cause of Jerusalem was profanation. I drew back and looked at the majestic Roman as if I saw the original tempter before me.

"Son of Vespasian, I am at this hour a poor man; I may in the next be an exile or a slave. I have ties to life as strong as ever were bound round the heart of man; I stand here a suppliant for the life of one whose loss would embitter mine! Yet not for wealth unlimited, for the safety of my family, for the life of the noble victim that is now standing at the place of torture, dare I abandon, dare I think the impious thought of abandoning, the cause of the City of Holiness."

The Passing of Power

The picture of her ruin rose before my eyes, and tears forced their way; my strength was dissolved; my voice was choked. The Romans fixed their looks on the ground, affected by the sincerity of a soldier's sorrow. I took the hand that was again offered.

"Titus! in the name of that Being to whom the wisdom of the earth is folly, I adjure you to beware. Jerusalem is sacred. Her crimes have often wrought her misery—often has she been trampled by the armies of the stranger. But she is still the City of the Omnipotent, and never was blow inflicted on her by man that was not terribly repaid. Hear me a moment."

Titus stood at this, and I continued:

"The Assyrian came, the mightiest power of the world; he plundered her Temple and led her people into captivity. How long was it before his empire was a dream, his dynasty extinguished in blood, and an enemy on his throne? The Persian came; from her protector he turned into her oppressor, and his empire was swept away like the dust of the desert! The Syrian smote her: the smiter died in agonies of remorse, and where is his kingdom now? The Egyptian smote her, and who now sits on the throne of the Ptolemies? Pompey came—the invincible conqueror of a thousand cities, the light of Rome, the lord of Asia riding on the very wings of victory. But he profaned her Temple, and from that hour he went down—down, like a millstone plunged into the ocean! Blind counsel, rash ambition, womanish fears were upon the great statesman and warrior of Rome. Where does he sleep? What sands were colored with his blood? The universal conqueror died a slave by the hands of a slave! Crassus came at the head of the legions; he plundered the sacred vessels of the sanctuary. Vengeance followed him, and he was cursed by the curse of God. Where are the bones of the robber, and his host? Go tear them from the jaws of the lion and the wolf of Parthia—their fitting tomb!

"You, too, son of Vespasian, may be commissioned for the punishment of a stiff-necked and rebellious people. You may scourge our naked vice by the force of arms; and then you

may return to your own land, exulting in the conquest of t fiercest enemy of Rome. But shall you escape the common fate of the instrument of evil? Shall you see a peaceful old age? Shall a son of yours ever sit upon the throne? Shall not rather some monster of your blood efface the memory of your virtues, and make Rome in bitterness of soul curse the Flavian name?"

Titus grew pale, and shuddering, covered his eyes with his mantle. His companions stood gazing on me with the aspect of men gazing on the messenger of fate.

"Spare Eleazar," was all that I could utter.

Titus made a sign to a tribune, who flew to bear, if not too late, the command of mercy.

While we continued in a silence that none of us felt inclined to break, a door opened behind me and an officer entered. It was Septimius. I seized him by the thoat.

"Villain!" I cried, "give me back my child; base hypocrite! give up my innocent daughter. Where have you taken her? Lead me to her, or die!"

Titus rose, in evident surprise and indignation.

"What do I hear, Septimius? Have you been guilty of this offense? Prince, let him loose until his general shall hear what he has to say for himself."

Septimius affected the most extreme and easy ignorance.

"Most noble Titus, I have to thank you for having saved my neck from the grasp of this hasty personage; but beyond that I have nothing to say for myself or any one else. I never saw this man before. I know no more of his daughter than of the queen of Abyssinia, or the three-formed Diana; and by the goddess, I swear that I believe him to be perfectly under her influence, and either a lunatic or a most excellent actor. Be honest, Jew, if you can, and acknowledge that you never saw me before in your life."

I stood in astonishment; his effrontery struck me dumb.

"You perceive, most noble Titus," he went on, "how a plain question puts an end to this public accuser's charges. But in his present state, whether affected or real, he should not be suffered to go at large; suffer me to send him to my

Arrest of an assassin

quarters, where he shall be guarded, until we at least find out what brought him here."

"Ingrate," I exclaimed, "you make me hate human nature! Better that I had left you to be trampled like the viper that you are."

The dark eye of the general, again turned on Septimius, seemed to require a graver explanation.

"Ingrate!" retorted he. "By Jupiter, the fellow's insolence is superb. For what should I be grateful? but for my escape from his detestable hands. Very probably he figured among the rabble that would have murdered me as they did the rest of us; grateful, yes, I ought to be for the lesson never to venture within his walls on the faith of the traitors that hold them. But let me be allowed to say, most noble Titus, that you condescend too much in listening to any of this rabble; nay, that you hazard the safety of the state in hazarding your person within the reach of one of a race of assassins."

Titus smiled, and waved back his companions, who, on the surmise, were approaching him.

"Let me be honored with your commands," urged Septimius, "to take this person in charge; felon or insane, I shall speedily put him in the way of cure."

A tribune, breathless with haste, came in at the moment with a letter, which he gave to Titus, and retired to a distant part of the tent to await the answer. The color rose to the Roman's cheek as he looked over the paper; he showed it to his companions, and then put it into my hand. I read the words:

"An assassin, hired by the chiefs of Jerusalem, yesterday passed the gates. His object is the life of the Roman general. He goes under the pretense of recovering one of his family, supposed to be carried off from the city, but who has never left his house. He has communications with the camp, by which he can enter at pleasure, and the noble Titus can not be too much on his guard."

The note was in an enclosure from Cestius, stating that it had just been transmitted to him from a high authority in Jerusalem. I flung it on the ground with the scorn due to

such an accusation, declaring that it was unnecessary for "my enemy Cestius to have put his name to a document which so easily revealed its writer."

"You, of course, Septimius," said the general, fixing his penetrating gaze on him, "could know nothing of this letter."

Septimius entered on his defense with seriousness, and showed that from the time and circumstances no share in it could be attached to him. Titus retired a few steps, and having consulted with the officers, who I perceived were unanimous for my being instantly put to death, addressed me in that grave and silver-toned voice which characterized the singular composure of his nature.

"We have exchanged blows and pledges of honor, prince, and I will not suffer myself to believe that a man of your rank and soldiership could stoop to the crime charged here. In truth, were none but personal considerations in question, I should instantly set you free. But there are weighty interests connected with my life, which make it seem fitting to my friends and advisers that in all cases precautions should be taken which otherwise I should disdain. To satisfy their minds, and the spirit of the Emperor's orders, I must detain you for a few days. Your treatment shall be honorable."

Septimius advanced again to demand my custody, but a look repelled the request, and I was directed to follow one of the secretaries of Titus.

CHAPTER LX

The Treatment of a Prisoner

A Favored Prisoner

A TROOP of cavalry were at the tent door. We set off through the storm, and a few miles from the camp reached a large building peopled with a crowd of high functionaries attached to Titus as governor of Judea.

"You must be a prodigious favorite with the general," said my companion, as we passed through a range of magnificent rooms furnished with Italian luxury, "or he would never have sent you here. He had these chambers prepared for his own residence, but your countrymen have kept him too busy, and for the last month he is indebted to them for sleeping under canvas."

I observed that "peace was the first wish of my heart, but that no people could be reproached with contending too boldly for freedom."

"The sentiment is Roman," was the reply. "But let us come to the fact. Titus, once fixed in the government, would be worth all the fantasies that ever fed the declaimers on independence. His character is peace, and if he ever comes to the empire, he will make the first of monarchs. You should try him and reap the first fruits of his talent for making people happy. There, look round this room; you see every panel hung with a picture, a lyre, or a volume; what does that tell?"

"Certainly not the habits of a camp; yet he is distinguished in the field."

"No man more. There is not a rider in the legions who can sit a horse or throw a lance better. He has the talents of a general besides; and more than all, he has the most iron perseverance that ever dwelt in man. If the two armies were to slaughter each other until there was but half a dozen spear-

men left between them, Titus would head his remnant and fight until he died. But whether it is nature or the poison that he drank along with Britannicus, he wants the eternal vividness of his father. Aye, there was the soldier for the legions. Look, prince, at this picture," and tell me what you think of the countenance."

He drew aside a curtain that covered a superb portrait of the Emperor. I saw a countenance of incomparable shrewdness, eccentricity, and self-enjoyment. Every feature told the same tale, from the rounded and dimpled chin to the broad and deeply veined forehead, overhung with its rough mat of hair. The hooked nose, the deep wrinkles about the lips, the thick dark eyebrows, obliquely raised as if some new jest was gathering, showed the perpetual humorist. But the eye beneath that brow—an orb black as charcoal, with a spot of intense brightness in the center, as if a breath could turn that coal into flame—belonged to the supreme sagacity and determination that had raised Vespasian from a tent to the throne.

The secretary, whose jovial character strongly resembled that of the object of his panegyric, could not restrain his admiration.

"There," said he, "is the man who has fought more battles, said more good things, and taken less physic than any emperor that ever wore the diadem. I served with him from decurion up to tribune, and he was always the same—active, brave, and laughing from morn to night. Old as he is, day never finds him in his bed. He rides, swims, runs, outjests everybody, and frowns at nothing on earth but an old woman and a physician. He loves money, 'tis true; yet what he squeezes from the overgrown, he scatters like a prince. But his mirth is inexhaustible; a little rough, so much for his camp education; but the most curious mixture of justice, spleen, and pleasantry in the world."

My companion's memory teemed with examples.

"An Alexandrian governor was ordered to Rome to account for a long course of extortion; immediately on his arrival he pretended to be taken violently ill, which, of course, put off the inquiry. The Emperor heard of this, expressed the

Emperor's Traits

greatest interest in so meritorious a public servant, paid him a visit the next day, disguised as a physician, ordered him a variety of medicines, which the unfortunate governor was compelled to take, renewed his visit regularly every day, and every day charged him an enormous fee! Beggary stared the governor in the face, and never was a complication of disorders so rapidly cured!

"I was riding out in his attendance one day a few miles from Rome when we saw a fellow beating his mule cruelly, and on being called to, insisted on his right to torture the animal. I was indignant and would have fought the mule's quarrel. But the Emperor laughed at my zeal, and after some jesting with the brutal owner, bought the mule, only annexing the condition that the fellow should lead it to the stable; he actually sent him with the mule two hundred and fifty miles on foot, to one of his palaces in Gaul, and with a lictor after him to see that the contract was fairly performed.

"One of his chamberlains had been soliciting a place about court, for, as he said, his brother. The Emperor found out the fact that it was for a stranger, who was to lay down a large sum. He sent for the stranger, ratified the bargain, gave him the place, and put the money in his own pocket. The chamberlain was in great alarm on meeting the Emperor some days after. 'Your dejection is natural enough,' said Vespasian, 'as you have so lately lost your brother; but, then, you should wish me joy, for he has become mine!'

"By the altar of Momus and the brass beard of the god Ridiculous, I could tell you a hundred things of the same kind," continued the jovial and inexhaustible secretary; "take but one more.

"One of our great patricians, an Æmilian, and as vain and insolent a beast as lives, had ordered a quantity of a particular striped cloth, which it cost the merchant infinite pains to procure. But the great man's taste had altered in the mean time, and he returned the cloth without ceremony, threatening, besides, that if the merchant made any clamors on the subject, his payment should be six months' work in the slave-mill. The man, on the verge of ruin, came, tearing his

hair and bursting with rage, to lay his complaint before the Emperor, who, however, plainly told him that there was no remedy, but desired him to send a dress of the same cloth to the palace. Within the week the patrician was honored with a message that the Emperor would dine with him, and the message was accompanied with the dress and an intimation that Vespasian wished to make it popular. Rome was instantly ransacked for the cloth, but not a yard of it was to be found but in the merchant's hands. The patrician's household must be equipped in it, cost what it would. The dealer, in pleasant revenge, charged ten times the value, and his fortune was made in a day.

Betrayin Court Secr

"Now Titus, with many a noble quality, is altogether another man. He abhors the Emperor's rough-hewn jocularity; he speaks Greek better than the Emperor does his own tongue; is a poet, and a clever one besides, in both languages; extemporizes verse with elegance; is no mean performer on the lyre; sings; is a picture-lover, and so forth. I believe from my soul that, with all his talents for war and government, he would rather spend his day over books and his evenings among poets and philosophers, or telling Italian tales to the ears of some of your brilliant orientals, than ride over the world at the head of legions. And now," said my open-hearted guide, "having betrayed court secrets enough for one day, I must leave you and return to the camp. Here you will spend your time as you please until some decision is come to. The household is at your service, and the officer in command will attend your orders. Farewell!"

Captivity is wretchedness, even if the captive trod on cloth of gold. My treatment was imperial; a banquet that might have feasted a Roman epicure was laid before me; a crowd of attendants, sumptuously habited, waited round the table; music played, perfumes burned, and the whole ceremonial of princely luxury was gone through, as if Titus were present instead of his heart-broken prisoner. But to that prisoner bread and water with freedom would have been the truer luxury.

I wandered through the spacious apartments, dazzled by their splendor and often ready to ask: "Can man be unhappy

Malatbiel Alone

in the midst of these things?" yet answering the question in the pang of heart which they were so powerless to soothe. I took down the richly blazoned volumes of the Western poets, and while at every line that I unrolled, I felt how much richer were their contents than the gold and gems that encased them, still I felt the inadequacy of even their beauty and vigor to console the spirit stricken by real calamity. I strayed to the crystal casements, through which the sunset had begun to pour in a tide of glory. The landscape was beautiful—a peaceful valley, shut in with lofty eminences, on whose marble foreheads the sunbeams wrought coronets as colored and glittering as ever were set with chrysolite and ruby. The snow was gone as rapidly as it had come, and the green earth, in the freshness of the bright hour, might almost be said "to laugh and sing." The air came, laden with the fragrance of flowers. There was a light and joyous beauty in even the waving of the shrubs as they shook off the moisture in sparkles at every wave; birds innumerable broke out into song, and fluttered their little wet wings with delight in the sunshine; and the rivulet, still swelled with the snows, ran dimpling and gurgling along with a music of its own.

But the true sadness of the soul is not to be scattered even by the loveliness of external things. I turned from the sun and nature to fling myself on my couch and feel that where a man's treasure is, there his heart is also.

"What might not in those hours be doing in Jerusalem?" mused I; "what fanatic violence, personal revenge, or public license might not be let loose while I was lingering among the costly vanities of the pagan? My enemy at least was there in the possession of unbridled authority"; and the thought was in itself a history of evil. "And where was Esther, my beloved, the child of my soul, the glowing and magnificent-minded being whose beauty and whose thoughts were scarcely mortal? Might she not be in the last extremity of suffering, upbraiding me for having forgotten my child; or in the hands of robbers, dragging her delicate form through rocks and sands; or dying, without a hand to succor, or a voice to cheer her in the hour of agony?"

Thought annihilates time, and I had lain one day thus sinking from depth to depth, I know not how long, until I was roused by the entrance of the usual endless train of attendants; and the chief steward, a venerable man of my country, whom Titus had generously continued in the office where he found him, came to acquaint me that the banquet awaited my pleasure. The old man wept at the sight of a chieftain of Israel in captivity; his heart was full, and when I had dismissed the attendants with their untasted banquet, he gave way to his recollections.

The palace was once the dwelling of Ananus, the high priest whose death under the cruelest circumstances was the leading triumph of the factions and the ruin of Jerusalem. In the very chamber where I sat he had spent the last day of his life, and left it only to take charge of the Temple on the fatal night of the assault by the Idumæans. He was wise and vigorous, but what is the wisdom of man? A storm, memorable in the annals of devastation, had raged during the night. Ananus, convinced that all was safe from human hostility in this ravage of the elements, suffered the wearied citizens to retire from their posts. The gates were opened by traitors; the Idumæans, furious for blood and spoil, rushed in; the guard, surprised in their sleep, were massacred; and by daylight eight thousand corpses lay on the sacred pavements of the Temple, and among them the noblest and wisest man of Judea, Ananus.

"I found," said the old man, "the body of my great and good lord under a heap of dead, but was not suffered to convey it to the tomb of his fathers, in the valley of Jehoshaphat. I brought his sword and his phylactery here, and they are now the only memorials of the noblest line that perished since the Maccabee. In these chambers I have remained since, and in them it is my hope to die. The palace is large; the Roman senators and officers reside in another wing, which I have not entered for years, and shall never enter; mild masters as the Romans have been to me, I can not bear to see them masters within the walls of a chief of my country."

The story of Naomi occurred to me, but she was so much

In Closer Confinement

beyond my hope of discovery that I forbore to renew the old man's griefs by her name. A sound of trumpets and the trampling of cavalry were now heard from the portal.

"It is but the nightly changing of the troops," said the steward, "or perhaps the arrival of officers from the camp; they often ride here after nightfall to supper, spend a few hours, and by daybreak are gone. But of them and their proceedings I know nothing. No Jew enters, or desires to enter, the banquet-hall of the enemies of his country."

A knocking at the door interrupted him, and an officer appeared with an order for the prisoner in the palace to be removed into strict confinement. The venerable steward gave way to tears at the new offense to a leader of his people. I felt some surprise, but merely asked what new alarm had demanded this harsh measure.

"I know no more," replied the officer, "than that the general has arrived here a few minutes since, and that as some attempts have been lately made on his life, the council have thought proper to put the Jewish poniards as much out of his way as they can. The order is universal, and I am directed to lead you to your apartment."

"Then let them look to my escape," said I; "I thank the council for this service. While I continued above suspicion, they might have thrown open every door in their dungeons. But since they thus degrade me, you may tell them that their walls should be high and their bolts strong to keep me their prisoner. Lead on, sir."

The council seemed to have been aware of my opinion, for my new chamber was in one of the turrets. The lower floor being occupied by the guard, there could be no undermining; the smallness of the building laid all the operations of the fugitive open to the sentinel's eye, and the height was of itself an obstacle that, even if the bars were forced, might daunt the adventurer. The steward followed me to my den, wringing his hands. Yet the little apartment was not incommodious; there were some obvious attempts at rendering it a fitter place of habitation than usual, and a more delicate frame than mine might have found indulgence in its carpets and

cushions. Even my solitary hours were not forgotten, and some handsome volumes from the governor's library occup a corner. There was a lyre, too, if I chose to sing my r- rows, and a gilded chest of wine if I chose to drink them away. The height was an inconvenience only to my escape, but a lover of landscape and fresh air would have envied me, for I had the range of the horizon and the benefit of every breeze from its four quarters. A Chaldee would have chosen it for his commerce with the lights of heaven, for every star, from the gorgeous front of Aldebaran to the minutest diamond spark of the sky, shone there in all its brightness. And a philosopher would have rejoiced in the secluded comfort of a spot which, in the officer's parting pleasantry, was in every sense "so much above the world."

CHAPTER LXI

A Steward's Narrative

Salathiel's Burden

To me, the prison and the palace were the same. No believer in fate, and a strong believer in the doctrine that in the infinite majority of cases the unlucky have to thank only themselves, I was yet irresistibly conscious of my own stern exception. That there was an influence hanging over me I deeply knew; that I might as well strive with the winds was the fruit of my whole experience; and with the loftiest calculation of the wonders that human energy may work, I abandoned myself on principle to the chances of the hour. I was the weed upon the wave, and whether above or below the surface, I knew that the wave would roll on, and that I must roll on along with it. I was the atom in the air, and whether I should float unseen forever or be brought into sight by the gilding of some chance sunbeam, my destiny was to float and quiver up and down. I was the vapor, and whether, like the evening cloud, my after-years were to evolve into glorious shapes and colors, or I should creep along the pools and valleys of fortune till the end of time—yet there I was, still in existence, and that existence bound by laws incapable of the choice or the caprices of man.

I had yet to learn the true burden of my great malediction, for the circumstances of my life were adverse to its fated solitude of soul; its bitter conviction that there was not a being under the canopy of heaven whose heart was toward me. I was still in the very tumult of life and battling with the boldest. Public cares, personal interests, glowing attachments, the whole vigorous activity of the citizen and the soldier were mine. I was still husband, father, friend, and champion; my task was difficult and grave, but it was ardent, proud, and animating. I was made for this energy of the whole man;

master of a powerful frame that defied fatigue, and was proof alike against the sharpest visitations of nature; and of an intellect which, whatever might be its rank, rejoiced in tasking itself with labors that appalled the multitude.

Idle as I knew the praise of man, and sovereign as was my scorn for the meanness which stoops to the vulgar purchase of popularity, I felt and honored the true fame—that renown whose statue is devoted, not by suspicious and clamorous flattery of the time, but by the solemn and voluntary homage of the future, whose splendor, like that of a new-born star, if it take ages to reach mankind, is sure to reach them at last, and shines for ages after its fount is extinguished; whose essential power, if it be coerced and obscured, like that of a man while his earthly tenement still shuts him in, is thenceforth to develop itself from strength to strength—the mortal putting on immortality.

In the whirl of such thoughts I was often carried away, to the utter oblivion of my peculiar fate, for the man and his associations were strong within me, in defiance of the command. The gloom often passed away from my soul, as the darkness does from the midnight ocean in the dash and foam of its own waters. Nature is perpetual and drives the affections, sleeping or waking, as it drives the blood through the old channels. It was only at periods, produced by strong circumstance, that I felt the fetter, but then the iron entered into my soul! To this partial pressure belongs the singular combination of such a fate as mine with an interest in the world, with my loves and hates, my thirst of human fame, my reluctance at the prospect of the common ills and injuries of life. I was a man, and this is the whole solution of the problem. For one remote evidence that I was distinct from mankind, I had ten thousand, direct and constant, that I was the same. But for the partiality of the pressure there was a lofty reason.

The man who feels himself above the common fate is instantly placed above the common defenses of mankind. He may calumniate and ruin; he may burn and plunder; he may be the rebel and the murderer. Fear is, after all, the great defense. But what earthly power could intimidate him?

A Message from Septimius

What were chains or the scaffold to him who felt instinctively that time was not made for his being; that the scaffold was impotent; that he should yet trample on the grave of his judge, on the moldered throne of his king, on the dead sovereignty of his nation? With his impassiveness, his experience, his knowledge, and his passions, concocted and blackened by ages, what breast could be safe against the dagger of this tremendous exile? What power be secure against the rebel machination or the open hostility of a being invested with the strength of immortal evil? What was to hinder a man made familiar with every mode of influencing human passions—the sage, the sorcerer, the fount of tradition, the friend of their worshiped ancestors—from maddening the multitude at whose head he willed to march, clothed in the attributes of almost a divinity?

But I was precluded or saved from this fearful career by the providential feeling of the common repugnances, hopes, and fears of human nature. Pain and disease were instinctively as much shunned by me as if I held my life on the frailest tenure; death was as formidable as my natural soldiership would suffer it to be; and even when the thought occurred that I might defy extinction, it threw but a darker shade over the common terrors, to conceive that I must undergo the suffering of death without the peace of the grave. Man bears his agony for once, and it is done. Mine might be borne to the bitterest extremity, but must be borne with the keener bitterness of the knowledge that it was in vain.

I was recalled from those reveries to the world by a paper dropped through a crevice in the rafters above my head. On seeing its signature, "Septimius," my first impulse was to tear it in pieces, but Esther's name struck me, and I read it through.

"You must not think me a villain, tho I confess appearances are much in favor of the supposition. But I had no choice between denying that I knew you and being instantly beheaded. This comes of discipline. Titus is a disciplinarian of the first order, and the consequence is that no man dares acknowledge any little irregularity before him: so far, his morality propagates knaves. But I must clear myself of the

charge of having acted disingenuously by your daughter. I take every power that binds the soul to witness that I know not what is become of her; nay, I am in the deepest anxiety to know the fate of one so lovely, so innocent, and so high-minded. A Lover's Confession

"And now, prince, that I am out of the reach of your frown, let me have courage to disburden my heart. I have long known Esther, and as long loved her. From the time when I was first received within your palace in Naphtali—and I have not forgotten that to your hospitality I then owed my life—I was struck with her talents and her beauty. When the war separated us and I returned to Rome, neither in Rome nor in the empire could I see her equal. To solicit our union I gave up the honors and pleasures of the court for the campaign in your hazardous country. I searched Judea in vain, and it was chiefly in the vague hope of obtaining some intelligence of Esther that I solicited the command of our unfortunate mission. There I felt all hazard more than repaid by her sight, to me lovelier than ever. I will acknowledge that I prolonged my confinement to have the opportunity of obtaining her hand. But her religious scruples were unconquerable. I implored her leave to explain myself to you. Even this, too, she refused, 'from her knowledge of your decision.' What then was I to do? Loving to excess, bewilderd by passion, oppressed with disappointment, and seeing but one object on earth, my evil genius prompted me to act the dissembler.

"Under pretext of disclosing some secrets connected with your safety I induced her to meet me, for the first and the last time, on the battlements. There I besought her to fly with me—to be my bride—to enjoy the illustrious rank and life that belonged to the imperial blood; and when we were once wedded, to solicit the approval of her family. I was sincere; I take the gods to witness I was sincere. But my entreaty was in vain; she repelled me with resolute scorn; she charged me with treachery to you, to her, to faith, and to sacred hospitality. I knelt to her—she spurned me. In distraction, and knowing only that to live without her was

Titus Gives a Banquet

wretchedness, I was bearing her away to the gate when we were surrounded by armed men. My single attendant fled; I was overpowered, and I saw Esther, my lovely and beloved Esther, no more."

There was an honesty in this full confession that did more for the writer's cause than subtler language. The young Roman had been severely tried, and who could expect from a soldier the self-denial that it might have been hard to find under the brow of philosophy? Stern as time and trial had made me, I was not petrified into a contempt for the generous weaknesses of earlier years; and to love a being like Esther —what was it but to be just? While I honored the high sense of duty which repelled a lover so dangerous to a woman's heart, I pitied and forgave the violence of a passion lighted by unrivaled loveliness of form and mind.

It was growing late, and the steward, who made a virtue of showing me the more respect the more I was treated with severity, came in to arrange my couch for the night; he would suffer no inferior hands to approach the person of one of the leaders of his fallen country.

"In truth," said he, "if I were not permitted to be your attendant to-night, my prince might have been forgotten, for every human being but myself is busy in the banquet-gallery."

Sounds of instruments and voices arose.

"There," said he, "you may hear the music. Titus gives a supper in honor of the Emperor's birthday, and the palace will be kept awake until daylight, for the Romans, with all their gravity, are great lovers of the table, and Titus is renowned for late sittings. Would you wish to see the banquet?"

So saying, he unbarred the shutters of a casement, commanding a view along the gallery, of which every door and window was thrown open for the breeze.

If an ancient Roman could start from his slumber into the midst of European life, he must look with scorn on its absence of grace, elegance, and fancy. But it is in its festivities, and most of all in its banquets, that he would feel the incurable barbarism of the Gothic blood. Contrasted with the fine displays that made the table of the Roman noble a picture

and threw over the indulgence of appetite the colors of the imagination, with what eyes must he contemplate the tasteless and commonplace dress, the coarse attendants, the meager ornament, the want of mirth, music, and intellectual interest —the whole heavy machinery that converts the feast into the mere drudgery of devouring!

The guests before me were fifty or sixty splendidly attired men, attended by a crowd of domestics equipped with scarcely less splendor, for no man thought of coming to the banquet in the robes of ordinary life. The embroidered couch, itself a striking object, allowed the ease of position, at once delightful in the relaxing climates of the south and capable of combining with every grace of the human figure. At a slight distance the table, loaded with plate, glittering under a profusion of lamps and surrounded by couches covered with rich draperies, was like a central source of light radiating in broad shafts of every brilliant hue. All that belonged to the ornament of the board was superb. The wealth of the patricians and their perpetual intercourse with Greece made them masters of the finest performances of the arts. The sums expended on plate were enormous, but its taste and beauty were essential to the refined enjoyment of the banquet. Copies of the most famous statues and groups of sculpture in the precious metals, exquisite trophies of Greek and Roman victory, models of the celebrated temples, mingled with vases of flowers and burning perfumes; and covering and coloring all was a vast scarlet canopy, which combined the groups beneath the eye, and threw the whole scene into the light that a painter would love.

But yet finer skill was shown in the constant prevention of that want of topic which turns conversation into weariness. There was a rapid succession of new excitements. Even the common changes of the table were made to assist this purpose. The entrance of each course was announced by music, and the attendants were preceded by a procession of minstrels, chaplet-crowned, and playing Grecian melodies. Between the courses a still higher entertainment was offered in the recitations, dramas, and pleasantries, read or acted by a class of professional satirists, of the absurdities of the day.

The Amusements of a Feast

It is easy to imagine how fertile a source of interest this must have been made by the subtle and splenetic Italian moving through Roman life; the most various, animating, and fantastic scene in which society ever shone. The recitations were always looked to as the charm of the feast. They were often severe, but their severity was reserved for public men and matters. The court supplied the most tempting and popular ridicule, but the reciter was a privileged person, and all the better-humored Cæsars bore the castigation without a murmur. No man in the empire was more laughed at than Vespasian, and no man oftener joined in the laugh.

One of this morning's sports was to collect the burlesques of the night before, give them new pungency by a touch of the imperial pen, and then despatch them to make their way through the world. The strong-headed sovereign knew the value of an organ of public opinion, and used to call their perusal, "sitting for his picture." The picture was sometimes so strong that the courtiers trembled. But the veteran, who had borne thirty years of battle, laid it up among "his portraits," laughed the insult away, and repeated his popular saying, "that when he was old enough to come to years of discretion and give up the emperor, he should become reciter himself and have his turn with the world."

The recitations again were varied by a sportive lottery, in which the guests drew prizes—sometimes of value, gems and plate—sometimes merely an epigram, or a caricature. The banquet generally closed with a theatric dance by the chief public performers of the day, and the finest forms and the most delicate art of Greece and Ionia displayed the story of Theseus and Ariadne, the flight of Jason, the fate of Semele, or some other of their brilliant fictions. In the presence of this vivid display sat, tempering its sportiveness by the majesty of religion, the three great tutelar idols of Rome—Jove, Juno, and Minerva, of colossal height, throned at the head of the hall; completing, false as they were, the most singular and dazzling combination that man ever saw, of the delight of the senses with the delight of the mind.

To me human delight was always a source of enjoyment,

and in the sounds of the harps and flutes and the pleasant murmur of cheerful voices I was not unwilling to forget the spot from which I listened. But the prisoner can not long forget his cell, and closing the casement I walked away.

"Little I ever thought," sighed the old steward, "of seeing that sight. But all nations have fallen in their time, and perhaps the only wonder is that Israel should have stood so long. It is still stranger to my eyes to see that gallery as it is to-night. It is fifteen years this very day since I saw the light of lamp or the foot of man within those casements."

"Yet," said I, "the great Ananus lived as became his rank, and there were then no dangers to disturb him in the midst of his people."

"But there was one terrible event which made those walls unhallowed; nay, even in this spot I would not remain alone through the night to have the palace for my own."

A rich strain of music that ushered in some change in the displays of the banquet interrupted my question, while the old man's countenance assumed something of the alarm which he described.

"That sound," said he, shuddering, "goes to my heart. It is the same that I heard on the night of death. On that night Matthan, the only son of my great master, was to be wedded to the daughter of the prince of Hebron, and that gallery was laid out for the wedding-feast. All the leaders of Jerusalem were there, all the noble women, all the chief priesthood; all the grandeur, wealth, and beauty of our tribe. But Matthan was not the son of his father's mind. He had fled from his father's roof years before, and taken refuge in the mountains. The caravan passing through Galilee dreaded the name of Matthan, for he was bold; the chief of the hills saw his followers flying from his side, for deadly was the spear of Matthan; but he was generous, and often the slave rejoiced in the breaking of his chains, and the peasant saw his flocks cover the valley again by the arm and the bounty of Matthan.

"I saw him on the day when he returned; danger or sorrow had wrought a change in him like the passing from youth to age. His strength was gone, and his voice was broken, like

A Countenance of Wrath and Wo

the voice of him that treads on the brink of the ti
His noble father wept over him, but gave him we
the palace was filled with rejoicing for the coming
first-born. Yet he took no delight in the feast, ne
praises of men nor in the voice of the singer. H
through his father's halls, even as the leopard, c
longing to escape to the desert and the prey again
ances were beginning to be heard in Jerusalem, s
into the hands of the evil one. Onias, the man o
trayed him into the secret ways of conspiracy
conquerors. His heart was bold and his temper h
was easily drawn into the desperate game by a
stirred up the generous spirit of our nobles, only t
blood to Rome.

"He grew more lonely day by day; withdrew
amusements of his rank, and shut himself up in
the palace, ending in this tower. In this room I ha
lamp burning through the livelong winter nights,
over the sleeplessness that showed he was among th

"At last a change was wrought upon him. He
he took delight in the horse and the chariot, in
and the feast, and the die. His father, that he
his posterity before he died, counseled him to t
Thamar, the noblest of the daughters of Hebron.
the marriage was appointed. On that day I saw
from the council-hall, after receiving the congrat
his friends. I saw him passing along to his cha
dared not cross him on his way. He thought t
alone, and then he gave way to his agony. Neve
hold such a countenance of wrath and wo. It w
with prodigal living, and it was now flushed with
raved, he rent his bridal raiment and cast it fr
wept; he knelt and cursed the hour he was born.
in my refuge, yet more in fear of his countenance
sword. He took letters from his bosom, read then
scattered their fragments in the air. He tottered
and I dreaded his rage, but I saw at a glance tha
was gone. He was talking to the air; he clasped

wildly; his face was covered with tears; he implored for mercy, and fell. I hastened to bear him to a couch; he saw me not, but cried out against himself as a betrayer and a murderer, the fugitive from honor, the criminal marked by the hand of Heaven.

"I called for help. His mountaineers rushed in; they repulsed me; and chiding him in their barbarian tongue, and seeming accustomed to those fits of sorrow, carried away in their arms the noble Matthan, crying like a child.

"The evening fell, and I saw him ride forth at the head of his kindred to bring home the bride. The wretchedness of the day had passed, and those who looked only on the lofty bearing and heard the joyous language of the leader of that train would have thought that sorrow had never touched his heart. I watched for his return with anxiety, for I deemed him unhallowed.

"But all was well; the bridal train returned. Matthan, glittering in jewels, came proudly, reining a steed white as the snow. The harp and trumpet, the chorus of the singers, the light of the torches, and the glitter of the youths and maidens who danced before the bride made me forget everything but the joy of seeing peace among us once more. But at the banquet the wonder of all was the bridegroom himself. Loud as the guests' voices were, his voice was the loudest; he laughed at everything, as if he had never known a care in the world, or was never to know one again. The jest was never out of his lips; and when he pledged the cup to the health of the company or the fair bride—and often he pledged it that evening—he always said something that raised shouts of applause. I once or twice passed near him, but he had wiped every sign of grief from his features, and if he seemed to be mad with anything, it was with joy. The gallery rang with admiration, and not less with surprise, for he had shut himself up so long from the people that he was almost unknown, and the world is generally good-natured enough to invent a character for those who will take no trouble to make one for themselves. Some had set him down for intolerable haughtiness; others for fear of mixing in the growing tumults;

The Coming of a Bride

others for a dealer in the black arts, and still others for a mere fool. But now opinions were altered, and every voice of his tribe was loud in wonder at the talents he had so long hid in retirement.

"I was standing in the train of the High Priest, near the central casement, through which you may now see the throne of Titus. My eyes, I know not why, strayed to this tower; I marked a feeble lamp, a form rushing backward and forward in gestures of violent sorrow. A foot beside me made me turn. There stood Matthan with his eyes fixed upon the tower. But his mind was gone. He looked like a man stricken into stone. He saw me not; he saw not the guests; he saw nothing but the feeble lamp, the hurrying form.

"The chorus of the singing women announced that the bride was about to come. I looked up at the tower; the lamp was twinkling its last, and the form was still seen wringing its hands. The hymn began that denotes the veiling of the bride; but my eyes were fixed on the dying light and the form, which now held a cup in its hand. A shriek was heard, so wild that the guests sprang from their seats in alarm and astonishment. My eye turned upon Matthan, but he had summoned up his strength, and tho I saw him shake in every limb, his proud lip wore a smile.

"Clasping his hand upon his brow, he abruptly turned from the window and demanded why the bridal attendants delayed the coming of the princess of Hebron. The lamp had now disappeared, and the tower was in darkness again. The portals were at length thrown open and the bride was led up to the canopy beneath which the bridegroom stood. He raised the veil. His countenance was instantly transformed into horror. He uttered no cry, but stood gazing. The bride let fall the veil again, and taking his hand, led him slowly and without a word down the hall.

"None checked this strange ceremony; none dared to check it. We were deprived of all power by astonishment. The High Priest himself stood with his venerable hands lifted up to heaven, as if he felt that evil was come upon his house. The wedded pair walked in silence through the long range of

chambers to the tower, and as they passed, the numberless attendants felt themselves bound by mysterious awe. But our senses at length returned, and Ananus, in the full dread of misfortune, yet bold to his dying hour, suffered none to go before him. We found the door of the tower barred, and long summoned Matthan to come forth and relieve our fears lest some desperate invention of sorcery had been played upon him. No answer was returned, and we forced the door. Matthan's Death

"What a sight was there! Two corpses lay side by side. The blood still trickled from the bosom of the unfortunate Matthan. I raised the veil of the bride; the hue of poison was upon the lips, but they were not the lips of the princess of Hebron. The countenance was Arabian, and of exceeding beauty, but wan and wasted by sorrow."

"Who, then, was his strange companion in the hall?" I asked.

The answer was given with a shudder. "I know not, but it seemed scarcely a being of this world. A new confusion arose. The mountaineers, on hearing of the death of their lord and still more of that noble creature in whom they honored the race of their chieftains, demanded vengeance: they were too fierce to listen to reason, and our attempts to explain the unhappy truth only kindled their rage. Simitars were drawn, blood was shed, and tho the barbarians were repelled, yet they plundered the wing of the palace and bore off the infant offspring of their dead mistress, the last scion of an illustrious tree that was itself so soon to feel the ax.

"I saw the unfortunate and guilty Matthan laid in the sepulcher of his fathers—the last that ever slept there, for his great sire, worthy of being laid in the monument of kings, was denied the honors of the grave by his murderers. Yet he sleeps in the noblest of all graves; his memory is treasured in the love and sorrows of his country.

"It was discovered that Matthan, during his wanderings in the desert, had wedded the daughter of a sheik. He loved her with the violence of his nature, but the prospects which opened to him on his return to his country made him shrink from the acknowledgment of his Arabian bride. Yet to live

The Arabian Stranger

without her he found impossible, and he brought tower. Surrounded by his mountaineers, this port palace was inaccessible. His solitude and the fi through the casements were often thought to imply the strange philosophy or evil superstitions that hac infect the noble youth of Palestine.

"But the necessity of sustaining his ambition by trious marriage drove his fickle heart at last to treac Arabian knew the intended marriage, and pined av his eyes. Remorse and ambition alternately distra The bridal procession was seen by the unhappy wif swallowed poison. The rest is beyond my power for. But it is rumored among the attendants th sights have since been seen and sounds of a brid heard in the chambers through which their last n procession was made; tho, whether it be truth or mon fear of the peasantry, I know not, nor indeed curiously to inquire."

CHAPTER LXII

A Prisoner in the Tower

As the old man spoke, sounds arose not unsuited to his tale. But my faith in the legend did not amount to so sudden a realization, and I looked toward the banquet. There, from whatever motive, everything was in sudden disturbance. The guests were hurrying from the tables. Many had thrown the military cloak over their festal robes; some were in the adjoining apartments hastily equipping themselves with arms and armor. A group was standing round Titus, evidently in anxious consultation. In the spacious grounds below, horsemen were mounting and attendants hurrying in all directions. The calls of the clarion echoed through the courts; shortly after a large body of cavalry came wheeling round to the portal of the gardens, and Titus went forth, conspicuous among the bustling crowd for his manly composure. He gave some orders which were despatched by tribunes galloping as for their lives; then mounting his charger, rode slowly through the gates at the head of his stately company, himself the most stately of them all.

Confusi among Ci

The woods surrounding the palace soon intercepted the view of the imperial troop; and after straining my eyes as long as I could see the glitter of a helmet by the waning moon, I turned to my casement to make that prayer for the peace of Jerusalem which had been nightly on my lips from the hour when they first could pronounce the name. From the dungeon has that supplication risen; from the mine; from the sands of the wilderness; from the shores of the farthest ocean; from the bosom of the rolling waters; from the fires of the persecutor; from the field before the battle; from the field covered with its dead; from the living grave of the

The Red Illumination

monk; from the cavern of the robber; from the palace; even from the scaffold!

While I continued in this outpouring of the soul, with my eyes fixed on the cloudy world above, a pale reflection spread over the masses of rolling vapor; it lingered, faded, and night covered the earth; suddenly a fierce luster turned the low and heavy clouds into the color of conflagration.

"There is an attack on either the enemy's camp or the city," I exclaimed to my companion. "Daybreak it can not be, for the middle watch has not been half an hour sounded. Help me to escape; be but my guide through the chambers, and name your recompense."

The steward wrung his helpless hands, and offered his life to my service, but described the precautions of my jailers so fully that I gave up the idea. Still I was tossed by anxious thoughts. I heard the treading of the guard until its recurrence irritated me. The moanings of the wind through the trees told that a storm was rising, and to get rid of the uneasy conflict between the desire of sleep and the difficulty of shutting out thought, I rose and watched the progress of the tempest.

The lightnings flashed in broad beams through the clouds, and the rain fell with the violence of the southern storm. But through the flash, deepening again, shone the red illumination above the city, and neither the roar of the wind nor the dash of the descending deluge could extinguish the shouts that, remote as they were, I knew to be shouts of battle. I measured the tower with my eye; I tried the strength of the bars; but the attempt only served to disturb my companion, who had survived his sorrows long enough to sleep as soundly as if there were not a wo on earth.

"I am glad," said he, "that you awoke me, for I was dreaming the story of my unfortunate lord and his son over again."

"The natural result of your having so lately renewed its recollection."

"Aye, there is perhaps scarcely a room under the palace roof where some heart is not trembling to-night with ghostly

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Titus rode at the head of his stately company, himself the most stately of them all.

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fear, nor a peasant's thatch where the death of Matthan and the Arabian has not made pale faces; and where men tell of the bridegroom stricken in his hour of pride. But——powers of Heaven preserve us! look there!" A figure in the Gallery

I looked, but it was to the old man, whose countenance alarmed me with the idea that he had wrought his imagination to a hazardous extreme. I took his cold hand, and telling him that I felt unable to sleep, gently laid his stiffened limbs on the couch and bade him try to rest. But his eye stared through the casement till I followed its direction, yet with only the added belief that he was overcome by the common terrors of the household; for to me tenfold darkness lay upon every object from the ground to the battlements.

I accidentally glanced at the gallery, and there I saw a figure, slight and shadowy, passing backward and forward in front of a quivering lamp! My surprise was more startling than I would venture to communicate to my companion, already almost paralyzed with fear. But if I had conjured up a phantom to give force to the tale, none could have been more closely similar. The figure was enveloped in robes whose richness I could perceive even across the court; the gestures, the wild hurry of the pacings through the chamber, the general air of wo and distraction, were not to be mistaken. In the midst of the silence I heard the creaking of bolts and the fall of chains that seemed to be at my side. A single word followed, but that word was terribly comprehensive—"Death!" The sound was uttered in a sepulchral tone, that left the imagination free to shape the picture with what sullenness it willed!

But the sound was scarcely uttered when I heard a shriek, wild as ever told of wo; saw the figure sink down, and the lamp quiver and expire! The old man had seen what I had seen, but the natural feebleness of age left him a mere helpless prey to superstitious fear, and no attempt to explain these singular coincidences could calm him. He was convinced that the vengeance that had stricken his master's house was still abroad, and that he had beheld its minister. Remonstrance was in vain, and he sank alternately into reveries and the stupefaction of spiritual terror.

Naomi, the Specter

I tended him with the more interest from my being not altogether unimpressed with the possibility that his alarms were just. I was no believer in the vulgar narratives of superstition. But nature has her mysteries!

While I sat beside the couch and watched the ebb and flow of life in a frame that I sometimes expected to see utterly give way, a jarring of bolts again struck my ear. I listened with a strange emotion. The old man had heard it, and in a new convulsion grasped both my hands and held me close. The sound returned; it increased; I saw the wall of the tower open and the figure stand before me.

"It is she; it is she!" shudderingly murmured my companion, fixing his eyes on it and holding me with the clasp of agony.

The heart beat loud within me; but I interposed myself between the corpse-like being whom I held in my arms and the unearthly visitant, and demanded "for what purpose it had come." The figure started as I spoke; then gazing intently on me as I turned to the light, threw the mantle from its forehead and fell at my feet. The lovely Naomi was the specter! Yet perfectly guiltless of the ghostly potency of her presence and the unfilial alarm into which she had thrown her adopted father, whom she was delighted to find, but whom she candidly acknowledged "she never dreamed of finding there."

"The tower contains a prisoner," said she tremblingly, "who must be saved this night, for to-morrow at daybreak is his dreadful hour. I knew that he would be condemned, and we agreed on a signal, by which I was to learn when the time was fixed. I have watched all night for it, and almost betrayed myself by a cry of horror that I could not suppress at the sight of that signal just now. I had no resource but to bear my own message, and assist him myself in escaping from this place of sorrow."

"But, my child, who is the prisoner, or where is he?"

She blushed and said: "One who saved me when the world was against me. He rescued me from the hands of barbarians —and could I leave him to perish?"

"Lead on then, and without delay, for daybreak is not far. But how shall we find our way to his dungeon?"

"I paid high," said she, "for my knowledge of this tower, and it has no concealments from me. Remove this bar."

I drew out a slender iron rod; a door deep in the wall gave way and disclosed a winding stair, by which we descended. We found the prisoner writing, and so earnestly occupied that our footsteps did not interrupt him.

"There," soliloquized he as he ran his eye down the epistle. "I think, my masters if not the better, some of you will be the wiser for my labors. Home truths are the truths, after all. Titus will learn what a set of incurable reprobates he has about him, and by this time to-morrow, when I shall care as little for mankind as mankind ever cared for me, I shall do the state service; from my gibbet turn reformer and make the scaffold popular. And now, for the farewell to my lady and my love."

He sighed and threw down the pen.

"No, my Naomi, I can say nothing half so fond or half so bitter as my feelings would have me say at this moment. Would that I had never seen you, if we are to part so soon. Yet why should I regret to have known innocence and beauty in their perfection? No, my love, rosy was the hour when I first saw you, and proud is even the parting hour that tells me I could have loved so noble a being—but all is better as it is. How could I have borne to see you following the fortunes of a wanderer, of a man without a country or a name? Then farewell, my Naomi dearest, farewell; you were the gleam of sunshine in my cloudy day, the star in my dreary night, and while my heart beats you shall be there. Your name shall be the last upon my lips, and if there be thought beyond the grave, you shall be remembered, and—oh, how deeply—loved!"

I had been on the point of disturbing his meditation, but Naomi, with the fine avarice of passion, would not lose a syllable. She held me back, and implored me by her countenance to let her have the full confession of her lover's faith. That beautiful countenance ran through all the shades of feeling,

The Arab Captain Recognized

and was covered with blushes and tears while the unconscious worshiper poured out his devotion. But the time was flying; I insisted on interrupting this epicureanism of the soul; and when Naomi found that she must hear no more, she would allow none but herself the pleasure of the surprise. A sigh which swelled from the prisoner's heart was echoed. He turned suddenly, and pronounced her name with a loudness of delight that nothing but the chance that protects the imprudent could have prevented from bringing the guard upon us. His quick eye soon caught me where I stood in shadow, and he sprang forward to overpower the intruder. But the lamp saved us from the encounter, and lifting his hands and eyes in amazement, he laughed as loudly as he had spoken.

"In the name of all the wonders of the world," exclaimed he, "are you here too? Where are we to meet next? We have met already in water, fire, and earth, and nothing is left for us now but the clouds. Come, be honest, prince, and tell me whether it was not for the sake of some such experiment that you ventured here; for if another hour finds us within these four walls, we shall know the grand secret as assuredly as Titus wears a head and has a traitor at his elbow."

It was the Arab captain! I was rejoiced to find that in attempting to save the life of Naomi's lover, I was discharging a debt to the preserver of my own. To my mention of this service he replied with soldierlike frankness that "I owed him no obligation whatever; he had long hated the intolerable cruelty of Cestius, and the debt was on his side, as I had indulged him with an opportunity that every officer in the service would have been happy to use."

Naomi hung upon me, pale, and anxiously listening to every sound abroad.

"This little trembler," said he sportively, as he took her passive hand, "I am destined to meet always in alarm. I first found her flying from a troop of human brutes who were robbing the baggage of the Roman camp; I thought her worth something better than to keep goats on the Libanus and weave turbans for some Syrian deserter; she was of the same opinion, and fell in love with me on the spot."

Naomi exclaimed against this version of the story.

Attempts Escape

"No matter for the mode," said he; "I give the facts. I dazzled her ambition by the promise of a palace—in the air; bribed her avarice by the display of a purse unconscious of gold; and bewitched her senses by a speech, a smile, and a figure that for the first time in my life I found to be irresistible."

Naomi again protested, and the dialog might have consumed half the night without their discovering the lapse of time, had I not interposed and inquired what further means of escape were in our power. The lovely girl started from her waking dream and pointed to a ring in the wall. I tried it, but it resisted my force. At length we all strove at it together. But no door opened. Naomi wrung her hands.

"The unfortunate lord of this tower in former times," said she, and the tears stood in her eyes, "always predicted that it would be fatal to his family To escape his own fate, he pierced its walls with passages in every direction, but they did not save my noble, my unfortunate father."

She sat down weeping while I tore at the ring, which finally broke off in my hands. The lover stood with folded arms, gazing in sad delight on the beautiful being from whom he was so soon to part forever, and whose face and form wore almost the shadowy loveliness of a vision.

The chance of their escape now devolved on me solely, for neither would have desired to disturb that strange and melancholy luxury of contemplation. But as the concealed door must be given up, the only resource was to return to my cell and thence make our way through the passage by which Naomi had arrived. A glance from the casement showed me the court filled with soldiery and lights moving through the palace. This hope was gone!

In the deepest doubt and fear I ventured up through the tower to discover whether my cell was not already in possession of the guard. I pushed back the door noiselessly; the cell was empty; even the old steward was gone. Imagination is a dangerous auxiliary in such a crisis, and it created out of this trivial change a host of alarms. He must have fled to

Ishtibel Discovers a Door

give notice of my retreat, or to rouse the vigilance of the soldiery by the stories of the wonders that he had seen. Escape was hopeless. I even heard a confused whispering, which proved that we had fallen into the snare.

There was now no alternative but to be seized and die, or to make a bold rush for life and take our chances. I carried the fainting Naomi up the stairs; and suppressing the infinite risk of the attempt to penetrate through a building in which its inmates were still awake and busy, and which was guarded by the vigilance of Roman patrols, I advised that we should do anything rather than remain where we were. She was timid and submissive; but to my surprise the bold seaman, the haughty leader of men, harder to be ruled than the elements, the gallant despiser of death but a day past, was now totally unnerved. The novelty of passion absorbed the spirit of the man; he lingered near his mistress, and gazed on her with an intenseness that told his world was there. To my questions he gave no answer, but obeyed without a word, or a glance turned from the exquisite countenance that sank and blushed under his gaze. If the actual power of enchantment had been wrought upon him, he could not have been more fixed, helpless, and charmed.

I heard the voice of pain, and thought of the ancient follower of the house of Ananus. My cooler judgment had acquitted him of betraying me into the enemy's hands. A part of the cell was filled up with remnants of a canopy removed from the statelier apartments. The groan came from behind them. I flung them away, and saw a door open by which he must have entered. I returned, desired the captain and Naomi to follow, wrapped myself in a cloak, and sword in hand, led the way through the darkness. I had not gone far when I found myself treading on a human body. I sprang back, but the figure, more startled than I, rolled down a succession of steps before me, and falling against a door, burst it open. A strong light from within flashed up the stairs, and taking Naomi's hand, I led her down this steep and narrow outlet of the grand gallery. As she came toward the light, a wild cry was given; a man rushed back, and exclaiming, "It is she

risen from the grave, the Arabian!" darted through the v: hall, in which were still a number of domestics setting it in order after the banquet. Every eye instantly turned to the spot from which we emerged. Naomi's white-robed form, followed by her lover's and mine wrapped to the brow in our dark mantles, formidably verified the superstition.

The crowd were already prepared to witness a wonder on this night of wo; they fled or fell on their faces. The man, still rushing on, propagated terror before us; and through the long vista of lighted chambers, where to be seen might have been ruin, we moved unquestioned until we reached the portal. It, too, had been thrown open by some of the fugitives; the gardens were deserted; the troops had been drawn to another quarter of the palace. Before us was welcome solitude, and we were soon winding through the wood-paths by the light of the stars.

CHAPTER LXIII

A Minstrel's Power of Speech

The Flight

WHILE we traversed the grounds, the heaving of the branches under the wind, which rose in strong gusts from time to time, and the rush of the rivulets from the hillsides, which retained the swell of the melting snows, prevented our hearing other sounds; but when we emerged from this little forest of every plant that yields fruit or fragrance and began to climb the surrounding ridge, the sights and sounds to which I had been so long accustomed broke upon us. To the south a long line of light showed where Jerusalem was struggling against a midnight assault, and the uproar of battle came wildly on the wind. The Roman camp-fires blazed round the promontory Scopas, like the innumerable crevices of a huge volcanic hill breathing flame from root to summit. But a more immediate peril lay behind us. The first height from which we could see the palace showed us the well-known fire-signals of the enemy flaming on its battlements. Our escape had been discovered. The signals were answered from every point of the horizon. Where a signal was, there was an enemy's post; we could not advance a step without the most imminent chance of seizure, and in those times, death by the shaft or the sword was the instant consequence. The signals were followed by the trumpet, and every blast from the palace roof was answered for miles round.

The whole horizon was alive with enemies, and yet, if in every call captivity and death had not been the language, this circling echo of the noblest of all instruments of sound, coming in a thousand various tones from the varied distances, softened by the dewy softness of the night, and breathing from sources invisible, as if they were inspired only by the winds, or poured from the clouds, might have seemed sublime.

But a new alarm rose in the direction of the forest, which now lay beneath us like a sea slightly silvered on its thousand billows by the sinking moon. The trampling of cavalry was distinctly heard in pursuit, and torches were seen rushing through the trees. The pursuit had turned into the very path by which we came, and the baying of a bloodhound up the ridge was guiding the cavalry to our inevitable capture if we remained. I was resolved not to be taken while I could fight or fly, and pointing out to my fellow fugitives the horsemen, as they scoured the foot of the hills, I plunged down into a ravine, where I could expect to find only some torrent too deep for us to pass. But it was at least protracted fate.

I had given Naomi into the hands of her lover, and while they slowly descended the precipice, returned to its edge to ascertain whether the enemy were still upon our steps. The rock toward the summit was splintered into a number of little pinnacles, grasping one of which, I clung, listening and gazing with indescribable nervousness. The sounds of pursuit had perished, or were so mingled with the common sounds of nature as to be unheard, and I was congratulating myself upon our total safety, and about to return to the spot where I had left my companions, when the torchlight shot up from the dell, immediately below me. I gave a hurried glance along the ravine, but Naomi was not there. A detachment of archers was climbing over the huge rocks that filled up its depth, and flashing torches through every hollow where a human being could lie.

To rescue my unfortunate charge was my first resolve, and I began to let myself down the abrupt side of the hollow before the torches disappeared. They at last seemed to be completely gone, but as I hung within a few feet of the path, a growl and a dash at my throat nearly overthrew my steadiness. I knew that a precipice of immense depth lay underneath, and in the utter darkness I could have no certainty that my next step might not carry me over it.

My sole expedient was to grasp the rock with one hand and defend myself to the last with the other. The bloodhound had tracked me, and he flew again at my throat; but I was

Time of the Cross

now prepared; I caught him in the bound and whirled him down the ravine. His howl, as he fell from crag to crag, betrayed me at once. A hundred torches rushed upward. I climbed the pinnacle, sprang from its top into a pine thicket, and winding over a long extent of broken ground, gradually lost torches and outcries together.

After a pause, to consider in what quarter final escape was most probable, a glimmering light through the thicket at a considerable distance toward the city determined me. My pursuers must be far behind; the loss of the bloodhound diminished still more their chance of reaching my track through a remarkably wild and broken district; and come what would, whether that light was kindled by friends or enemies, I should see them before they could discover me. I struggled on until I reached the base of a ridge, on whose farther side the light gleamed. To ascend it was beyond my powers, but by gliding along the base I found a crevice, which, enlarged whether by nature or the human hand, led through the hill. My way in darkness was brief; I had not gone a third of the distance when the light shone strongly through the cavern. At its mouth I stood overwhelmed—I had strayed into the memorable valley of the Crosses!

Thousands of men, besmeared with blood, dust, and clay, half naked, brandishing weapons still dripping with gore; whirling torches; shouting out roars of triumph; howling in desperate lamentation; kneeling and weeping over the dead with the most violent affliction; wrapping themselves in robes and armor; tearing away their raiment, and flinging sword and spear into the flames; throwing hundreds of corpses into one promiscuous burning, round which they danced with furious exultation; carrying away on litters of lances and branches, corpses that they seemed to hallow as more than mortal; every strange variety of human passion, wound up to its wildest height, was pictured before me, and all was thrown into the most living distinctness by the blaze of an immense central heap of timber.

The horrid cruelties of the execution had been heard of in Jerusalem, and the spirit of the people was roused to ven-

geance. With that imperishable courage which distinguished them above all nations, a scorn of hazard that in those unhappy days only urged them to their ruin, they determined to make the enemy pay in slaughter for the memory of their warriors. A multitude without a leader, but among whom served with the simple spear many a leader, poured out from the gates to attack an enemy flushed with victory, and secured in entrenchments, impregnable to the naked strength of my unfortunate countrymen. They divided into two armies, one of which assaulted the lines, while the other marched to the valley of the Crosses. The assault on the lines was repelled after long and desperate displays of intrepidity. It was the intelligence of this attack that had broken up the banquet. The Romans sustained heavy losses in the early part of the night; their outposts in the plain were sacrificed, and the chief part of their cantonments burned.

The Last of Conflict

But the "army of vengeance," a name given to it alike by Jew and Roman, accomplished its purpose with dreadful retribution. The legionaries posted to defend the valley were trampled down and destroyed at the first charge. Troop on troop, sent to extricate them, met with the same fate. One of the few prisoners described the valley, when his cohort reached its verge, as having the look of a living whirlpool, a vast and tempestuous rolling and heaving of infuriate life, into which the attempt to descend was instant destruction.

"Every cohort that entered it," said the centurion, "was instantly engulfed and seen no more. Last night our legion, the fifteenth, lay down in their tents five thousand strong; to-night there are not ten of us on the face of the earth."

The conflict was long, and the last of the enemy were under the Jewish sword when I reached the mouth of the fissure. But in the first intervals of the struggle, the remains of our tortured people had been taken down from the accursed tree, tended with solemn sorrow, and given up to their relatives and friends to be borne back to Jerusalem. The crosses were thrown into a heap and set on fire; the fallen legionaries underwent the last indignities that could be inflicted by scorn

Salathiel Burns a Cross

and rage; and when even those grew weary, were flung into the blazing pile.

The fate of the noble Eleazar was still unknown, and to obtain the certainty of his preservation or to render the last honor to his remains, I forced my way toward the spot on which I had seen him awaiting death. But my searches were in vain; the witnesses on both sides were now where there is no utterance. Guard, executioner, and victim were clay; the battle had raged chiefly round that spot, and the ground, trampled and deep in blood, gave melancholy evidence of the havoc. There were painful and peculiar signs of the sacrifice that had extinguished the little group of the converts, and I poured oil and wine upon their hallowed ashes. A large fragment of a cross still stood erect in the midst of them.

"Was it upon thee, accursed thing," I exclaimed, "that the life-blood of my brother was poured? Was it upon thee that the last breath was breathed in torture from the lips of virtue, heroism, and purity? Never shalt thou minister again to the cruelty of the monsters that raised thee there."

Indignantly I tore up the beam, and dragging it to the pile by my single strength—to the wonder of the crowd, who eagerly offered their help, but whom I would not suffer to share in this imaginary yet consoling retribution—I rolled it into the flames amid shouts and rejoicings.

Daybreak was now at hand, and the sounds of the enemy's movements made our retreat necessary. We heaped the last Roman corpse on the pile, covered it with the broken spears, helmets, and cuirasses of the soldiery, and then left the care of the conflagration to the wind. From the valley to Jerusalem our way was crowded with the enemy's posts; but the keen eye and agile vigor of the Jew eluded or anticipated the heavy-armed legionaries, by long experience taught to dread the night in Judea, and we reached the Grand Gate of Zion as the sun was shooting his first rays on the pinnacles of the Temple.

In those strange and agitated days, when every hour produced some extraordinary scene, I remember none more extraordinary than that morning's marching into the city. It

was a triumph, but how unlike all that bore the name! It was no idle, popular pageant; no fantastic and studied exhibition of trophies and treasures; no gaudy homage to personal ambition; no holiday show to amuse the idleness or feed the vanity of a capital secure in peace and pampered with the habits of opulence and supremacy. It was at once a rejoicing, a funeral, a great act of atonement, a popular preservation, and a proud revenge on the proudest of enemies.

On the night before, not an eye had closed in Jerusalem. The Romans, quick to turn every change to advantage, had suffered the advance of our irregular combatants only until they could throw a force between them and the gates. The assault was made, and with partial success; but the population, once roused, was terrible to an enemy fighting against walls and ramparts, and the assailants were, after long slaughter on both sides, drawn off at the sight of our columns moving from the hills.

We thus marched in unassailed, a host of fifty thousand men, as wild and strange-looking a host as ever trod to acclamations from voices unnumbered. Every casement, roof, battlement, and wall in the long range of magnificent mansions, leading round by the foot of Zion to Mount Moriah, was crowded with spectators. Man, woman, and child of every rank were there straining their eyes and voices, and waving hands, weapons, and banners in honor of their deliverers from the terror of massacre. Our motley ranks had equipped themselves with the Roman spoils wherever they could, and among the ragged vestures, discolored turbans, and rude pikes, moved masses of glittering mail, helmets, and gilded lances. Beside the torn flags of the tribes, embroidered standards were tossing with the initial of the Cæsars, or the golden image of some deity, mutilated by our scorn of the idolater.

The Jewish trumpets had scarcely sent up their chorus, when it was followed by the clanging of the Roman cymbal, the long and brilliant tone of the clarion, or the deep roar of the brass conch and serpent. Close upon ranks exulting and shouting victory came ranks bearing the honored dead on litters and bursting into bitter sorrow; then rolled onward thou-

Esther's Return

sands bounding and showing the weapons that they had torn from the enemy; then passed groups of the priesthood—for they, too, had long taken the common share in the defense—singing one of the glorious hymns of the Temple; then again followed litters, surrounded by the wives and children of the dead, wrapt in inconsolable grief. Bands of warriors, who had none to care for, the habitual sons of the field; armed women; chained captives; men covered with the stately dresses of our higher ranks; biers heaped with corpses; wagons piled with armor, tents, the wounded and the dead; every diversity of human circumstance, person, and equipment that belongs to a state in which the elements of society are let loose—in that march successively moved before the eye. With the men were mingled the captured horses of the legionaries; the camels and dromedaries of the allies; herds of the bull and buffalo, droves of goats and sheep; the whole one mighty mass of misery, rejoicing nakedness, splendor, pride, humiliation, furious and savage life, and honored and lamented death; the noblest patriotism and the most hideous abandonment to the excesses of our nature.

As soon as I could extricate myself from the concourse, I hastened to appease the anxieties of my family, who had suffered the general terrors of the night, with the addition of their own stake in my peril and that of Constantius. My first inquiry was for Esther. To my great delight, she had returned, but was still in nervous alarm. On the night of her being led through filial zeal to meet Septimius, she was seized by a party of armed men and by them conveyed to a dungeon, where questions had been put to her tending to charge me at once with magic and correspondence with the enemy. But this persecution ceased, and she found herself as unexpectedly set at liberty as she had been seized. At the gate of her prison the minstrel had met her, and through the midst of the city, then in its fiercest agitation, had with singular dexterity conducted her safely home.

A service of this kind was not to go unrewarded, and he had been suffered to remain under our roof until my return. But by that time he had made his ground secure by such zealous

service and so many graceful qualities, that even Miriam, sensitive and sagacious as she was, desired that he should be retained.

From his knowledge of the various dialects of Asia and his means of unsuspected intercourse, few events could occur of which he had not obtained some previous knowledge. His adroitness in availing himself of his knowledge I had already experienced in my escape from the gates, and it was to him that was due the flight of the negroes. A stray charger, a mask, and the common juggler's contrivance of breathing flames, made up the demon that defrauded the Ethiopian exchequer. But his dexterity in the arts of elegance and taste was singular; his pencil was dipped in nature, and the sketches, which he was perpetually making of the wild and picturesque population that now filled our streets, were incomparable. He sculptured, he modeled, he wove; he wrought the gold filigree and chainwork, for which our artists were famous, with a skill that the most famous of them have envied. His knowledge of languages seemed the natural result of his wanderings, but it was extraordinarily various and pure. The dance and song were part of his profession; but from the little imperfect harp in use among the minstrels he drew tones that none other had ever delighted me with—sounds of such alternate spirit and sweetness, such tender and heart-reaching power, that they were like an immediate communication of mind with mind.

And the charm of those acquirements was enhanced by the graceful carelessness with which he made his estimate of their value. To my questions how he could at his age have mastered so many attainments, his reply was that with his three teachers "everything might be learned; common sense alone excepted, the peculiar and rarest gift of Providence! Those three teachers were Necessity, Habit, and Time. At his starting in life Necessity had told him that, if he hoped to live, he must labor; Habit had turned the labor into an indulgence; and Time gave every man an hour for everything unless he chose to sleep it away."

But he had higher topics, and the sagacity of his views, in

Constantius' Absence

a crisis that was made to shake the wisdom of the wise, often held me in astonishment. The fate of Constantius deeply perplexed me. He had now been absent long, and no tidings of him could be heard among the returning warriors further than that he had joined them in the march to the valley of the Crosses, had distinguished himself by the intrepidity of his attack on the legionary guard at the entrance, and was seen for a short time with a captured standard in his hand leading on the people. Unable to endure the silent anguish of those round me, silent only through fear of giving me pain, I had determined on passing the walls again to seek my brave and unfortunate son among the fallen. But Miriam's quick affection detected me, and with weeping prayers she implored that "I should not risk a life on which hung her own and those of her children."

The sound of the lyre came suddenly upon the air, and to dissipate the cloud that was gathering on my mind, I wandered to a balcony where, in the evening light and the pleasant breathing of the breeze, the minstrel was touching the strings to the song that had first attracted me. I flung my wearied frame on a couch and listened until memory became too keen, and I waved my hand to him to change the strain. He obeyed, but his heart was in the harp no more; his touch faltered, the song died away, and he approached me with a soothingness of voice and manner that none would have desired to resist.

"My prince," said he, "you are unhappy, and if your sorrows can be lightened by any service of mine, why not command me?"

He waited; but I was too much absorbed in gloomy speculation.

"I can pass the gates," he timidly continued, "if such be my lord's will."

I made a sign of dissent, for the enemy, since their late surprise, had begun to urge the siege with increased vigilance. Yet my anxiety for the fate of Constantius, and scarcely less for that of Naomi and her lover, must have been visible.

He still lingered nigh, watching the indications which inward struggle so forcibly paints upon the external man. Salathiel's Prejudice

"Prince of Naphtali," said he in a steadier tone, "among my teachers I forgot to mention one, and that one the most effective of all—Self-determination! not the mere disregard of personal risk, but the intrepidity of the mind. I loved knowledge, and I pursued it without fear. Nature is boundless, wise, and wonderful—but prejudice bars up the gate of knowledge. The man who would learn must despise the timidity that shrinks from wisdom, as he must hate the tyranny of opinion that condemns its pursuit. Wisdom is like beauty, to be won only by the bold."

I looked up at the young pronouncer of the oracle. His countenance, animated by the topic, wore an expression of power, in which I should never have recognized the delicate and dejected being that he always appeared, except in some moment of sportiveness, come and gone with the quickness of lightning.

"Minstrel, apply this to our people or their bigoted and ignorant leaders. I have no prejudices."

"All men have them, my prince, and the only distinction is that in some they are mean, dark, and malignant; in others they are lofty, generous, and sensitive; yet they are but the stronger for their nobleness. The mind itself struggles to throw off the vile and naked fetter. But how many forget the incumbrance of the chain of gold in its preciousness!"

He hesitated, and then, with a still more elevated air, again began:

"You despise, for instance, the little ingenuities of our profession, and I own that in general they deserve nothing else. But if there were to come before you some true lover of nature, a disciple of that sublimer philosophy which holds the secrets of her operations, a master of those superb influences which rule the frame of things, and yet more, guide the fates of men and nations—would not your prejudices—and noble ones they are—lead you to repel the offer of his mysteries?"

Thoughts tending to those mysteries had so often occurred to me, and my mind was by its original constitution so fond of

The Minstrel's Attire

the abstruse and the wild, that I listened with interest to the romance of philosophy. The figure before me was not unsuited to the illusion; slight, habited in the fanciful dress of his art, a tunic of purple cloth, bound round the waist with a girdle; the turban, a mere band of scarlet silk, lightly laid upon his curls. There was in all this nothing that was not to be seen at every hour in the streets, but round his waist, instead of the usual girdle of the minstrels, he wore to-night a large golden serpent, embossed and colored with a startling resemblance to life, and a broad golden circlet wrought with devices of serpents clasping his brow. The countenance was vividness itself, not without that occasional wandering and touch of melancholy that showed where early care has been, yet redeeming the gloom by a smile that had the sweetness and suddenness of the sunbeam across an April shower.

The evening music of the Roman camps roused me as their ranks were drawn out for the customary exercise. I turned from them to glance upon the battlements, that were now crowded with stragglers of the tribes inhaling the air of the fields and like myself gazing on the movements of the enemy. The thought pressed on me how soon and how terribly all this must end; what were the multitudes to be that now lived and breathed beneath my glance? The thought was too painful. I turned from earth to look upon the east, where the evening star was lying on a rosy cloud, like a spirit sent to bring back tidings from this troubled world.

"There, boy," said I, "will your wisdom tell me the story of that star? Are its people as mad as we? Is there ambition on one side and folly on the other? Are their great men the prey of a populace, and their populace the fools of their great men? Have they orators to inflame their passions; lawyers to beggar them in pursuit of justice; traders, to cheat them; heroes, to give them laurels at the price of blood; and philosophers, to be the worst plagues among them?"

"Even that knowledge," said the minstrel, "may not be beyond the flight of the human intellect; but prejudices must be first overcome; we must learn to scorn idle names, defy idle fears, and use the powers of nature to give us the mas-

tery of nature! There are virtues in plants, in metals, even in words, that to seek, alarms the feeble, but to possess, constitutes the mighty. There are influences of the air, of the stars, of even the most neglected and despised things, that may be gifted to confer the sovereignty of mankind."

I listened with the passive indulgence of one listening under a spell; his voice had the sweetness and the flow of song, and his language was made impressive by gestures of striking intelligence and beauty. He pointed to the skies, to the flowers, to the horizon, that glowed like an ocean of amber; and his fine countenance assumed a changing character of loftiness, loveliness, or repose as he gazed on the sublime or the serene.

"Boy," said I faintly, "are not such the studies by which the pagan world is made evil?"

He smiled. "No! Light is not further from darkness than wisdom from the superstition of the pagan. Rome is filled with the madness that falls upon idolatry for its curse —that has fallen since the beginning of the world—that shall fall until its end. She is the slave of ghostly fear. This hour, among the proudest, boldest, wisest, within the borders of paganism, there lives not a man unenslaved by the lowest delusion. The soothsayer, the interpreter of dreams, the sacrificer, the seller of the dust of the dead, the miserable pretender to magic—those are the true rulers of the haughty empire—those are the scepter-bearers to whom the Emperor is a menial—those are the men of might who laugh at authority, set counsel at naught, and are sapping the foundations of the state, were they deep as the center, by sapping the vigor of the national mind."

While he spoke he was with apparent unconsciousness sketching some outlines on one of the large marble slabs of the wall. My eyes had followed the sun until the balcony, darkened by an old vine, was in the depth of twilight. To my surprise, the marble began to be covered with fire, but fire of the softest and most silvery hue. The surprise was increased by seeing this glowworm luster kindle into form. I saw the portrait of Constantius, and by his side Naomi and

The King of Metals

her lover. As the lines grew clearer still, I saw them in chains and in a dungeon! The extraordinary information which the minstrel had the means of obtaining made me demand in real alarm whether the picture told the truth, and that if it did, I should be instantly acquainted with whatever might enable me to save them.

"And trifles like those fires can excite your astonishment?" he replied; "what if I were to tell you of wonders such as it has not entered into the mind of the world to imagine, yet which are before us in every hour of our lives, are mingled with everything, are grasped in our insensate hands, are trodden by our careless feet? See these crystals"—he scraped a portion of the niter exuding from the wall—"in these is hidden a power to which the strength of man is but air—to which the bulwarks round us are but as the leaf on the breeze—at whose command armies shall vanish, mountains shake, empires perish—the whole face of society shall change; yet by a sublime contradiction, combining the greatest evil with the greatest good—the most lavish waste of life with the most signal provision for human security!"

"Look on this metal," said he, pointing to some of the leaden ornaments of the balcony, "and think what is the worth of human judgment. Who would give the pearl or the diamond, the silver or the gold, for this discolored dross? Yet here is the king of metals—the king of earth; for it can create, subdue, and rule all that earth produces of power. Within this dross are treasures hidden, more than earth could buy—truth, knowledge, and freedom. It can give the dead a new life and the living a new immortality. It can sink the haughtiest usurper that ever sinned against man into the lowest scorn. It can raise the humblest son of obscurity into preeminence, and even without breaking in upon the seclusion that he loves, set him forth to every future age crowned with involuntary glory. It can flash light upon the darkest corners of the earth—light never to be extinguished. It can civilize the barbarian; it can pour perpetual increase of happiness, strength, and liberty round the civilized. It can make feet for itself that walk through the dungeon walls; wings

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"Judea must fall!"

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that the uttermost limits of the world can not weary; eyes to which the darkest concealments of evil are naked as the day; intellect that darts through the universe and solves the mightiest secrets of nature and of mind! But in it, too, is a fearful power of ruin." The Supremacy of Man

He gazed on me with a glance that seemed to shoot fire.

"Holding the keys of opulence and empire," he continued, "it can raise men and nations to the most dazzling height—but it can stain, delude, and madden them until they become a worse than pestilence to human nature."

While he spoke, his form assumed a grandeur commensurate with his lofty topics; the power of his voice awoke with the awaking power of his mind. My faculties succumbed under his presence, and I could only exclaim:

"More of those wonders; give me more of those noble evidences of the supremacy of man!"

"Man!" said my strange enlightener; "look upon him as he is, and what more helpless thing moves under the canopy of heaven? The prey of folly, the creature of accident, the sport of nature, the surge whirls him where it will; the wind scorns his bidding; the storm crushes him; the lightning smites him. But look upon man when knowledge has touched him with her scepter."

The circlet on his brow seemed to quiver and sparkle with inward luster; the golden serpent that clasped his robe seemed to writhe and revolve. I felt like one under fascination. A strange sense of danger thrilled through me, yet mixed with a dreamy and luxurious sense of enjoyment. The air seemed heavy with fragrance, and I sat listening in powerless homage to a lip molded by beauty and disdain.

"Man, the sport of nature!" said he, pointing to a bead of dew that hung glittering on a leaf of the vine. "Say man, the sovereign of nature! With but so feeble an instrument as this dew-drop he might control and scorn the wind and the wave! Or would you defy the storm in darkness, without sun or star speed through the unknown ocean, and add a new world to the old? Within this fragment lies the secret."

He struck off a brown splinter from the stone of the balcony.

Exiled—Desperate—Undone

"Or would you behold regions to which the stars that now blaze above our heads are but the portal," he said; "kingdoms of light never penetrated by mortal vision; generations of worlds? By what splendid influence, think you, that the miracle is to be wrought? Even by this dust!"

He took up a few grains of the sand at his feet and poured them into my robe. He saw his time.

"Would you," exclaimed he, "be master of those magnificent secrets? Then bind this girdle round you and invoke the name that I shall name."

I shuddered; the arts of the diviner flashed upon me. But I had listened too long not to be enfeebled by the temptation. I felt the passion which lost us paradise—the thirst of forbidden knowledge. Still I resisted. The young deceiver pressed me with more distinct promises.

"In your fate," said he, "the fate of your nation is bound up. Has it not been declared that a great deliverer is to come, by whom the face of the enemies of Judah is to be withered, and the scepter of the earth given to the hand of Israel? Pledge yourself to me and be that deliverer! You shrink! Know then—that even while I speak, every creature of your blood is in chains; your house is desolate; your fortunes are overthrown; you are cut off root and branch; you are exiled—desperate—undone!"

I felt a dreadful certainty that his words were true. My heart bled at the picture of ruin. I wavered. The temptation tingled through my veins.

"What were the sacrifice of myself," thought I, "wretched and sentenced as I was, to the preservation of beings made for happiness? Or was I to hesitate, let the risk be what it might, when virtue, patriotism, and boundless knowledge were added to that preservation? For the trivial honors that man could give to man, the highest intellects of the earth had been influenced, but the honors of the restorer of Judah were an immortal theme—the old splendors of triumph were pronounced vain and dim, the old supremacy of thrones weakness, to the domination and grandeur of the sovereign who should sway the returning tribes of Zion."

The figure approached me, and in a voice that sank with subtle force through every nerve pronounced the vow that I was to utter. I was terror-struck; a cloud came over my sight; strange lights moved and glittered before me. I felt the unspeakable dread that my faculties should betray me, and that I should unconsciously yield to a temptation which yet I had no strength to withstand. Judea Must Fall

While I sat helpless and almost blind, I was aroused by a majestic voice. I looked up. Eleazar was at my side. I would have flung myself into his arms; I would have cast myself at his feet, but an indescribable sensation told me that my noble brother was to be so approached no more.

"Well and wisely hast thou resisted," were his solemn words, "for in thee are the last fortunes of thy people. Judea must fall; but fallen with her as thou shalt be, and desolate, despairing, and wild as shall be thy sojourn, the last blow of ruin to both would be given hadst thou yielded to the adversary."

I glanced at the minstrel. His visage was horror; he stood deformed, like one dead in the moment of torture. I closed my eyes against the hideous spectacle. A sound of hurrying steps made me open them, after how long an interval I know not. I was alone!

CHAPTER LXIV

The Destruction of Jerusalem

To the Tower of Antonia

THE sounds of the footsteps increased. Overwhelmed as I was by the trial that my mind had just undergone, I sat nearly unconscious of external things till I was roused by a strong grasp from behind and saw myself surrounded by armed men. I was passively bound; and indifferent to fortune, was flung into a litter and conveyed to the Tower of Antonia. In this vast circle of fortifications, the citadel of the former Roman garrison, the Jewish government was now held, or rather Onias lorded it over the population. He had discovered my dwelling, and the first fruit of his knowledge was my seizure and that of my family. He was now playing the last throw of that desperate game to which his life had been given. Power was within his reach, yet there I stood to thwart him once more, and he was resolved to extinguish the first source of his danger. Yet I was popular, and with all his daring, he desired to cast the odium of my death on the Sanhedrin. I was to be tried on the ground of treating with the enemy; my family were seized, to shake my courage by their peril, and I was to be forced to an ignominious confession as the price of saving their lives.

At the mouth of a dungeon a torch was put into my hands. I was left to make my way, and the iron door was closed that had shut out many a wretch from light and life. At the bottom of the steps I found a man sleeping tranquilly on the stone. The glare of the torch disturbed him; he started up, and, looking in my face, exclaimed in the buoyant and cheerful tone by which I should have recognized him under any disguise:

"By Jupiter! I knew that we were to meet! If I had to sleep to-night at the bottom of the sea, I should wager my

simitar to a straw that our bodies would be found lying side by side. I presume we mount the scaffold together to-morrow for the benefit of Jewish morality. Well, then, since our fates are to be joined, let us begin by—supping together."

It was the captain! He laid his store on the ground; but I was heartsick, and could only question him of Naomi, and the misfortune which had betrayed him into the hands of the tyrant.

"Our history is the briefest in the world," was the answer; "we found ourselves pursued, and we fled. The pursuers followed faster than my fair mistress could run, or I could carry her. So we were overtaken before we could clear the rocks, and our captors were forthwith carrying us to the Roman camp, in great joy at their prize. But it was intended to be an unlucky day for the legions. We came across a Jewish troop, headed by a fine, bold fellow, who dashed upon the captors and fluttered them like a flight of pigeons. Nothing could promise better than the affair, for my new captor turned out to be an old friend, and one of the most gallant that ever commanded a trireme. Many a day the Cypriot and I chased (Nemesis forgive us for it!) the pirates through the Cyclades: I, however, did not know then what pleasant personages the brothers of the free-trade might be."

He smiled, and the sigh that followed the smile told how little he had since found to compensate for his old adventures.

"A Cypriot. Your captor was my son, my Constantius!" I exclaimed.

"The very man. When he had found me out under my Arab trappings, he was all hospitality, and invited me to share the honors of his princely father's house. His troop soon scattered every man to his home, and I was gazing at the head of an incomparable knave and early acquaintance, Jonathan, nailed up over the gate for some villainy which he had not been as adroit as usual in turning to profit, when Constantius, myself, and that lovely girl, whom I shall never see more"—he bent his brows at the recollection—"were seized by the guard, separated, and sent, I suppose, alike to the dungeon."

The Egyptian's Papers

Shortly after midnight I was brought before the tribunal. Onias was my accuser, and I was astonished at the dexterity, number, and plausibility of his charges—magic, treachery, the betrayal of my army, the refusal to push the defeated enemy to a surrender, lest by the cessation of the war my ambition should be deprived of its object; and last and most astonishing, the assassination of my kinsman, Jubal, through fear of his testimony!

I made my defense with the fearlessness of one weary of life. Some of the charges I explained; others I promptly repelled. To the imputation of treachery I answered in a single sentence.

"Read that correspondence with the enemy and judge which is the traitor."

I took the Egyptian's papers from my sash and flung them on the table. The aspect of my accuser at the words was one that might have made his sternest hater pity him. He gasped, he trembled, he gnashed his teeth in rage and terror, and finally took refuge in the ranks of his followers. But the judges themselves were in visible perplexity; they looked over the papers, held them to the lamps, and examined them in all imaginable ways, until the chief of the Sanhedrin rising, with a frown that fixed all eyes on me, flung the papers at my feet. The deepest silence was round me as I took up the rejected proofs. To my astonishment they were utterly blank!

I now recollected that on my entrance I had been pressed upon by the crowd. In that moment the false papers must have been substituted. I saw the Egyptian gliding away from the side of Onias, and saw by the countenance of my accuser that the tidings of the robbery had just reached him. He now declaimed against me with renewed energy. He was eloquent by nature; the habit of public affairs had given his speaking that character of practical vigor and reality which is essential to great public impression; his fortunes hung in the scale—perhaps his life; and he poured out the whole collected impulse in a torrent of the boldest and most nervous declamation upon my head. Still my name was high; my rank was not to be lightly assailed; my national services were felt; and

even the corrupt judicature summoned for my ruin were not so insensible to popular feeling as to violate the forms of law to crush me. The trial lasted during the night. I had the misery to see my wife, my children, Constantius, Naomi, my domestics, my fellow warriors, every human being whom there was a chance of perplexing, or terrifying into testimony, brought forward against me. The Secret the Sign

As a last resource, on the secret suggestion of the Egyptian, who had his own revenge to satisfy, the adventures of the pirates' cavern were declaimed upon, and the captain was summoned from his cell. His figure and noble physiognomy made him conspicuous, and a general murmur of admiration arose on his advance to the tribunal. Miriam was at my side. I felt her tremble; her color went and came, and she drank in every tone of his voice with an intense anxiety. But when, in answer to the questions of Onias, he detailed his story, and in answer to the charge of his being an enemy denied that he was either Roman or Greek, Miriam's spirit hung upon every word.

"A soldier's best pedigree," said he, concluding, "is his sword. I know no more than that I was reared in the house of a Cypriot noble, to whom I had been brought by a trader of Alexandria. My protector made me a sailor, and would have made me his heir, but Roman insolence disgusted me, and I left my command, bearing with me no other inheritance than a heart too proud for slavery, my simitar, and this signet, which I have worn from my infancy."

He took from his bosom a large sculptured gem fastened to a chain of pearls. Miriam put forth her trembling hand for it, read with a starting eye her own name and mine, and exclaiming, "My son! my son!" tottered forward and fell fainting into his arms.

I flew to them both, and never did a wo-worn heart beat with keener joy than when I, too, clasped my son, my long-lost, my first-born. Yet the cloud gathered instantly. Had he not come to take the earliest embrace of his parents in the crisis of their fate—the promise of an unbroken lineage, found only in the day when my country was in the jaws of destruc-

Salathiel's Farewell

tion—the father awaking to those loveliest and happiest ties of our nature only when the ax of the traitor or the sword of the enemy was uplifted to cut them asunder forever—the prince, the patriot, the warrior, summoned to the first exercise of his noble rights and duties—when in the next hour a heap of dust might be all that was left of his family and his people!

I clung to my son with a fondness thirsting to repay its long arrear. His desertion in the hands of strangers; the early hardships; the loss of a mother's love and a father's protection; the insults and privations that the struggler through the world must bear; the desperate hazards of his life; even the errors into which necessity and circumstance had driven him, rose up in judgment against me; I reproached myself even for the accident, perhaps the irresistible accident, that gave my infant to the roaring waters. But the tears and exclamations of the people round us recalled us. I might then have walked from the hall without any man's daring to lay a hand upon me, for the public feeling, touched by the discovery of my son, was loud for my instant liberation. But I was not to be satisfied with this imperfect justice, and I demanded that the tribunal should proceed.

The presence of my family was felt too strong for the fears of my persecutor, and he demanded that they should retire. An impression, like the warning of a superior spirit, instantly told me that the parting was forever! The same impression was evidently on their minds, for their parting was like an eternal farewell. The whole group at once gathered round me. Constantius and Salome knelt before me for final forgiveness. My son and his betrothed bowed their heads to ask my blessing. Miriam and Esther came last, and silently hung upon my neck, dissolved in tears of matchless anguish and love. I lifted my eyes and heart to Heaven, and tho oppressed with the terrible conviction of my own fate, put forth my hands and blessed them in the name of the God of Israel. I saw them pass away. My firmness could bear no more; I wept aloud. But with my sorrow there was given a hope—a light across the gloom of my soul. When I saw

their stately forms solemnly move along through the fierce and guilty multitude, and the distant portal shut upon them, I thought of the sons and daughters of the great patriarch passing within the door of the ark from the midst of a condemned world.

The night wore on; the people, exhausted by the length of a trial, protracted for the purpose, had left the hall nearly empty; and Onias, now secure of a tribunal that dreaded nothing but the public eye, urged the decision. The judges were his creatures through corruption or fear; his followers alone remained. Sure to be crushed, the fluctuations of hope were gone; and I listened to the powerful and high-wrought harangue of my enemy without a feeling but of admiration for his extraordinary powers, or of pity for their perverter. While he stood, drinking in with ears and eyes the wonder and homage of the audience, I myself called for sentence.

"Scorning," said I, "to reason with understandings that will not comprehend, and consciences that can not feel, I appeal from the man of blood to the God of mercies; from the worse than man of blood, from the corrupter of justice, to HIM who shall judge the judge; to Him who shall yet pass sentence on all in the sight of earth and heaven."

The chief of the tribunal rose; my condemnation was upon a lip quivering and pale; he had already in his hand the border of the robe which he was to rend, in sign that the accused was rent from Israel.

A confusion at the portal checked him, and the words resounded: "Shed not the innocent blood!" The voice was as a voice from the sepulcher, melancholy, but searching to the very heart. The guard gave way, and a man, covered from head to foot with a sepulchral garment, rushed up the immense hall. At the foot of the tribunal he flung off the garment, and disclosed a face and form that well might have ranked him among the dwellers of the grave.

"I have come from the tombs," exclaimed he; "I had lain down to die in the resting-place of my fathers, in the valley of Jehoshaphat. A man in white raiment stood beside me and commanded me to come and bear witness of the truth.

Onias be Accused

The Romans were round me—he led me through them; the battlements were before me—he led me through them; riot, fury, and frenzy stood in my path through your city—he led me through them; and lo! here I come, and proclaim by his command: 'Shed not the innocent blood.'"

Onias stood paralyzed. No memory of mine could recall the haggard features of the stranger. The chief of the tribunal in manifest confusion required his name.

"My name," he answered, with a wild wave of his hand, "is nothing—air—is gone. What I was, is past; what I shall be, the tomb alone must tell; but what I am, is the witness, commissioned to proclaim Onias the betrayer of the blood of your nobles, the slave of Rome, the traitor to his country, the apostate to his religion."

All hands were lifted up in astonishment. Onias, sick at heart, made a feeble gesture of denial.

"Dares the traitor deny his own handwriting?" was the indignant reply. "Let him read his treason, committed within these twelve hours."

He stalked over to the guilty Onias and held his letters to the Roman general before his shrinking eye.

While my eyes were fixed on the portal through which had vanished my last hope of happiness, I was startled by an outcry, and I saw the gleam of steel at my throat. Onias, in despair of smiting me by the arm of the law, had made a frenzied effort to destroy me by his own. Quick as lightning the stranger threw himself between us and grasped the assassin; they struggled—they were involved in the large and loose robe and fell together. I sprang forward to separate them. But the deed was done. Onias lay rolling upon the ground; the dagger was in the stranger's grasp, and it was crimson to the hilt. I could feel no vindictiveness against the dying, and I offered him my hand. He threw a violent expression of scorn into his stiffening features, and cried at convulsive intervals:

"No compassion—no hypocrisy for me—I die as I lived. I hated you, for you thwarted me.—You have the best of the game now; but if I had lived till to-morrow, I should have

been lord of Jerusalem.—The Romans will settle all.—You and yours would have been in my power.—You shall perish. —That boy is your son; he was brought to me in his infancy; I hated you as my rival; and I swore that you should never see your first-born again. I sold him to the Alexandrian.— You shall not live to triumph over me; your dungeon shall be your tomb; another night, and you sleep no more, or sleep forever."

He gathered his mantle over his face and died.

His followers, after the first consternation, demanded vengeance on the stranger. But it was now my time to protect him, and I declared that no man should strike him but through me.

"This is noble and generous," interrupted he, "but useless. I, too, am dying; but I rejoice that I am dying by the wound meant for you. Have I at last atoned? Have you forgotten? Can you forgive? Then, prince of Naphtali, lay your hand upon this heart, and while it beats believe that there you are honored. Time has changed me; misery has extinguished the last trace of what I was. Farewell, my kinsman, friend, chieftain—and remember—Jubal."

I caught him in my arms; my heart melted at his sufferings, his generous attachment, his heroic devotion, his deep repentance.

"You have more than atoned," I exclaimed; "you are more than forgiven. Live, my manly, kind, high-hearted Jubal; live for the honor of your race—of your country—of human nature."

He looked up with a smile of gratitude, and faintly uttering, "I die happy," breathed in my arms the last breath of one of the most gallant spirits that ever left the world.

Loud shouts abroad and blazes that colored the roof with long columns of lurid light put an end to the deliberation of the tribunal. The enemy were assaulting the citadel, and the mockery of justice was summarily closed by returning me to my dungeon, to await times fitter for the calmness of judicial murder.

The assault continued for some hours; but to my cell, sunk

Dungeon's Heat

in the very foundations of the fortress, day never came; and I lay, still buried in darkness, when I heard sounds like the blows of pickaxes, and from time to time the fall of heavy bodies, followed by a roar. The air grew close, and chill as the dungeon had been, I experienced a sensation of heat still more painful. The heat increased rapidly. I tried to avoid it by shifting my place in the vault. But the evil was not to be baffled—the air grew hotter and hotter. I flung myself on the pavement to draw a cool breath from the stones; they began to glow under me. I ran to the door of the dungeon; it was iron, and the touch scorched me. I shouted, I tore at the walls, at the massive rings in the floor, less perhaps from the hope of thus escaping than from the vague eagerness to deaden present pain by violent effort. But I tore up the pavement and broke down the fragments of the walls in vain. The walls themselves began to split with the heat; smoke eddied through the crevices of the immense stones, and the dungeon was filled with fiery vapor. My raiment encumbered me; I tore it away, and on the floor saw it fall in ashes. I felt the agonies of suffocation; and at last, helpless and hopeless, threw myself down, like my raiment, to be consumed.

I had scarcely touched the stone when I felt it shake and vibrate from side to side. A hollow noise like distant thunder echoed through the vault; the walls shook, collapsed, opened, and I was plunged down a chasm, and continued rolling for some moments in a whirl of stones, dust, earth, and smoke.

When it subsided, I found myself lying on the green sward, in noonday, at the bottom of a valley, with the tower of Antonia covered with the legionaries, five hundred feet above me. The remnants of huge fires round pillars of timber explained the mystery. The enemy had undermined the wall, and by burning the props, had brought it down at the moment of the assault. Onias, the planner of the attack, for which he was to be repaid with the procuratorship of Judea, had placed me in the spot where ruin was to begin, and cheered his dying moments with the certainty that, acquitted or not, there I must be undone!

I long lay confused and powerless beside my dungeon!

But the twilight air revived me, and I crept through the deserted entrenchments of the enemy until I reached one of the gates, where I announced my name, and was received with rejoicings. The heart of my countrymen was heroic to the last, and deeply was its heroism now demanded; for the whole force of the enemy had been brought up for final assault, and when I entered, every portion of the walls was the scene of unexampled battle. Where the ground suffered the approach of troops, the enemy's columns, headed by archers and slingers innumerable, rushed to the rampart, climbing up the breaches, with their shields covering their heads. Against the towers were wheeled towers filled with troops, who descended on the wall and fought us hand to hand. We felt the continued blows of the battering-rams, shaking the battlements under our feet. Where the ground repelled direct assault, there the military machines poured havoc, and those were the most dreaded of all. Preparati

The skill of man, exerted for ages on the arts of compendious slaughter, has scarcely produced the equals of those horrible engines. They threw masses of unextinguishable fire, of boiling water, of burning oil, of red-hot flints, of molten metal, from distances that precluded defense, and with a force that nothing could resist. The catapult shot stones of a hundred-weight from the distance of furlongs, with the straightness of an arrow, and with an impulse that ground everything in their way to powder. The fortitude that scorned the Roman spear, and exulted in the sight of the columns mounting the scaling-ladders, as mounting to sure destruction, quailed before the tremendous power of the catapult. The singular and ominous cry of the watchers, who gave notice of its discharge, "The son cometh," was a sound that prostrated every man upon his face, until the crash of the walls told that the blow was given.

Every thought that I had now for earth was in the tower of Antonia! But there the legions rendered approach impossible, and I could only gaze from a distance and see, in the bitterness of my soul, the enemy gradually forcing their way from rampart to rampart. It was in vain that I strove to collect a

Wo to the city!"

few who would join me in a desperate attempt to succor its defenders. I was left alone, and sitting on the battlements, I took the chance of some friendly spear or stone.

Through all the roar I heard the voice of Sabat, the Ishmaelite: the eternal "Wo!—wo!—wo!" loud as ever, and in appalling unison with the hour. He now came rushing along the wall with the same rapid and vigorous stride as of old, but his betrothed no longer followed him. She was borne in his arms! The stones from the engines thundered against the wall; they tore up the strong buttresses like weeds; they struck away whole ranks of men, and whirled their remnants through the air. They leveled towers and swept battlements away with their defenders at a blow. But Sabat moved unshrinking on his wild mission. His cry now was terrible prophecy.

"A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the holy house, a voice against the bridegroom and the bride, a voice against this whole people."

He stopped before me, and pointing to the face of his bride, said with a sudden faltering and tears: "She is gone; she is dead. She died last night. I promised to die too. She follows me no more. It is I that must follow her."

Death was in his face, and my only wonder was that a form so utterly reduced could live and move. I offered him some provision from the basket of a dead soldier at my feet. For the first time he took it, thanked me, and ate. Not less to my surprise, he continued gazing round him on the movements of the enemy, on the temple, the tower of Antonia, and the hills. But his station was eminently perilous, and I pointed out one of the military engines taking its position to play upon the spot where we were. He refused to stir.

"The look may be long," said he, "when a man looks his last."

I heard the roar of the engine, and leaped from the rampart to escape the discharge. Sabat stood, and again began his cry: "Wo to the city, and to the holy house, and to the people!" The discharge tore up a large portion of the battle-

ment. Sabat never moved limb or feature. The wall was cut away on his right and left, as if it had been cut with an ax. He stood calmly on the projecting fragment with his lips to the lips of his bride. I saw the engine leveled again, and again called to him to escape. He gave me no answer but a melancholy smile; and crying out, with a voice that filled the air: "Wo to myself!" stood. I heard the rush of the stone. It smote Sabat and his bride into atoms!"

The Conf Heaven Earth

The fall of our illustrious and unhappy city was supernatural. The destruction of the conquered was against the first principles of Roman polity, and to the last hour of our national existence, Rome held out offers of peace, and lamented our frantic determination to be undone. But the decree was gone forth from a mightier throne. During the latter days of the siege, a hostility to which that of man was as the grain of sand to the tempest that drives it on, overpowered our strength and senses.

Fearful shapes and voices in the air; visions startling us from our short and troubled sleep; lunacy in its most hideous forms; sudden death in the midst of vigor; the fury of the elements let loose upon our unsheltered heads; we had every terror and evil that could beset human nature, but pestilence; the most probable of all in a city crowded with the famishing, the diseased, the wounded, and the dead. Yet, tho the streets were covered with the unburied, tho every wall and trench was streaming with gore, tho six hundred thousand corpses lay flung over the rampart, naked to the sun —pestilence came not; for if it had come, the enemy would have been scared away. But the "abomination of desolation," the pagan standard, was fixed, where it was to remain until the plow passed over the ruins of Jerusalem!

On one night, that fatal night! no man laid his head upon his pillow. Heaven and earth were in conflict. Meteors burned above us; the ground shook under our feet; the volcano blazed; the wind burst forth in irresistible blasts, and swept the living and the dead in whirlwinds, far into the desert. We heard the bellowing of the distant Mediterranean, as if its waters were at our side, swelled by a new deluge.

1st Sign The lakes and rivers roared and inundated the land. The fiery sword shot out tenfold fire. Showers of blood fell. Thunder pealed from every quarter of the heaven. Lightning, in immense sheets, of an intensity and duration that turned the darkness into more than day, withering eye and soul, burned from the zenith to the ground, and marked its track by forests on flame, and the shattered summits of the hills.

Defense was not thought of, for the mortal hostility had passed from the mind. Our hearts quaked for fear, but it was to see the powers of heaven shaken. All cast away the shield and the spear, and crouched before the descending judgment. We were conscience-smitten. Our cries of remorse, anguish, and horror were heard through the uproar of the storm. We howled to the caverns to hide us; we plunged into the sepulchers to escape the wrath that consumed the living; we would have buried ourselves under the mountains! I knew the cause, the unspeakable cause, and knew that the last hour of crime was at hand. A few fugitives, astonished to see one man among them not sunk into the lowest feebleness of fear, came round me, and besought me to lead them to some place of safety, if such were now to be found on earth. I told them openly that they were to die, and counseled them to die in the hallowed ground of the Temple. They followed me through streets encumbered with every shape of human suffering, to the foot of Mount Moriah. But beyond that, we found advance impossible. Piles of cloud, whose darkness was palpable, even in the midnight in which we stood, covered the holy hill. Still, not to be daunted by anything that man could overcome, I cheered my disheartened band, and attempted to lead the way up the ascent. But I had scarcely entered the cloud when I was swept downward by a gust that tore the rocks in a flinty shower round me.

Now came the last and most wondrous sign that marked the fate of Israel. While I lay helpless, I heard the whirlwind roar through the cloudy hill, and the vapors began to revolve. A pale light, like that of the rising moon, quivered on their edges, and the clouds rose and rapidly shaped themselves into

the forms of battlements and towers. The sound of voices was heard within, low and distant, yet strangely sweet. The luster brightened, and the airy building rose, tower on tower, and battlement on battlement. In awe that held us mute, we knelt and gazed upon this more than mortal architecture, which continued rising and spreading, and glowing with a serener light, still soft and silvery, yet to which the broadest moonbeam was dim. At last it stood forth to earth and heaven, the colossal image of the first Temple, the building raised by the wisest of men, and consecrated by the visible glory. "Let us hence"

All Jerusalem saw the image, and the shout that, in the midst of their despair, ascended from its thousands and tens of thousands, told what proud remembrances were there. But a hymn was heard that might have hushed the world. Never fell on my ear, never on the human sense, a sound so majestic, yet so subduing; so full of melancholy, yet of grandeur. The cloudy portal opened, and from it marched a host such as man had never seen before, such as man shall never see but once again; the guardian angels of the city of David!—they came forth glorious, but with wo in all their steps; the stars upon their helmets dim; their robes stained; tears flowing down their celestial beauty.

"Let us go hence," was their song of sorrow; "Let us go hence," was answered by the sad echoes of the mountains. "Let us go hence," swelled upon the night to the farthest limits of the land. The procession lingered long on the summit of the hill. Then, the thunder pealed; and they rose at the command, diffusing waves of light over the expanse of heaven. Their chorus was heard, still magnificent and melancholy, when their splendor was diminished to the brightness of a star. The thunder roared again; the cloudy temple was scattered on the winds; and darkness, the omen of her grave, settled upon Jerusalem!

I was roused from my consternation by the voice of a man.

"What!" said he, "sitting here, when all the world is stirring? Poring over the faces of dead men, when you

A Glance toward the Temple

should be the foremost among the living? All Jerusalem in arms, and yet you scorn your time to gain laurels?"

The haughty and sarcastic tone was familiar to my recollection; but to see, as I did, a Roman soldier within a few feet of me was enough to make me spring up, and draw my simitar, careless of consequences.

"You ought to know me," said he, without moving a muscle; "for tho it is some years since we met, we have not been often asunder. And so here you have been sitting these twelve hours among corpses, to no better purpose than losing your time and your memory together!"

I looked round; the sun was in his meridian. The little band that I had led to the foot of the mountain were lying dead, to a man.

"Are you not a Roman?" I exclaimed.

"No; but I conclude that nearly as much absurdity and mischief may be committed under these trappings as under any other, and therefore I wear them. But you may exchange with me if you like. This cuirass and falchion will help you to money, riot, violence, and vice—and what more do nine-tenths of mankind ask for in their souls? Take my offer and you will be on the winning side; another thing that men like. But be expeditious, for before this sun dips his forehead in the Asphaltites, the bloodshed and robbery will be over."

His laugh, as he uttered the words, was bitterness itself, and I felt my flesh instinctively shudder. But a glance toward the Temple told me that the words were true. The legions had forced their way to the foot of the third and weakest rampart, which I now saw flying in pieces under the blows of the battering-rams. They must have marched by the very spot where I had sat since midnight, and I probably escaped only by being taken for one of the dead. I wrung my hands in agony. He burst into a wild roar of derision.

"What fools you lords of the creation are! What is the loss of life to the naked wretches that you see running about like frightened children on those battlements, or to the clothed wretches that you see ready to massacre them, for the honor and glory of a better-clothed wretch?—a dinner too

much will revenge them on the Emperor of the earth. The spear or the arrow comes, and quick as thought their troubles are at an end. Man!—the true misery is to live, to be constrained to live, to feel the wants, wearinesses, and weaknesses of life, yet to drag on existence; to be——what I am."

He tore the helmet from his forehead, and, with a groan of agony, flung it to a measureless distance in the air. In amaze and terror I beheld Epiphanes! The same Greek countenance, the same kingly presence, the same strength and heroic stature, and the same despair, were before me that, in the early years of my wo, I had seen on the shores of the Dead Sea.

"I told you," said he, with a sudden return to calmness, "that this day would come; and to tell you so required no spirit of prophecy. There is a time for all things, long-suffering among the rest; and your countrymen had long ago come to that time. But one grand hope was still to be given; they cast it from them! Ages on ages shall pass before they learn the loftiness of that hope or fulfil the punishment of that rejection. Yet, in the fulness of time, shall the light break in upon their darkness. They shall ask, Why are we the despised, the branded, the trampled, the abjured, of all nations? Why are the barbarian and the civilized alike our oppressors? Why do contending faiths join in crushing us alone? Why do realms, distant as the ends of the earth, and diverse as day and night—alike those who have heard our history, and those who have never heard of us but as the sad sojourners of the earth—unite in one cry of scorn? And what is the universal voice of nature but the voice of the King of nature?"

I listened in reverence to language that pierced my heart with an intense power of truth, yet with a pang that made me writhe. I longed, yet dreaded, to hear again the searching and lofty accents of this being of unwilling wisdom.

"Man of terrible knowledge," said I, "canst thou tell for what crime this judgment shall come?"

Awe was written upon his mighty brow, and his features quivered as he slowly spoke.

"Their crime? There is no name for it. The spirits of

The Roar of Assault

heaven weep when they think of it. The spirits of the abyss tremble. Man alone, the man of Judea alone, could commit that horror of horrors."

He paused and prostrated himself at the words; then rising, rapidly uttered: "Judge of the crime by its punishment. From the beginning, Israel was stubborn, and his stubbornness brought him to sorrow. He rebelled, and he was warned by the captivity of a monarch or the slaughter of a tribe. He sinned more deeply, for he was the slave of impurity; then was his kingdom divided; yet a few years saw him powerful once more. He sinned more deeply still, for he sought the worship of idols. Then came his deeper punishment, in the fall of his throne and the long captivity of his people. But even Babylon sent back the forgiven.

"Happy, I say to you, happy will be the hour for Israel —for mankind, for creation—when he shall take into his hand the records of his fathers, and, in tears, ask, What is that greater crime than rebellion? than blasphemy? than impurity? than idolatry? which, not seventy years, nor a thousand years, of sorrow have seen forgiven; which has prolonged his wo into the old age of the world—which threatens him with a chain not to be broken but by the thunder-stroke that breaks up the universe!"

"And still," said I, trembling before the living oracle,— "still is there hope?"

"Look to that mountain," was the answer, as he pointed to Moriah. Its side, covered with the legions advancing to the assault, shone in the sun like a tide of burning brass. "It is now a sight of splendid evil!" exclaimed he. "But upon that mountain shall yet be enthroned a Sovereign before whom the sun shall hide his head, and at the lifting of whose scepter the heaven and the heaven of heavens shall bow down! To that mountain shall man, and more than man, crowd for wisdom and happiness. From that mountain shall light flow to the ends of the universe, and the government shall be the Everlasting!"

The roar of the assault began, and my awful companion was recalled to the world.

"I must see the end of this battle," said he, in his old mixture of sarcasm and melancholy; "man's natural talent for making himself miserable may go far, but he is still the better for a teacher. On the top of that hill there are twenty thousand men panting for each other's blood like tigers; and yet without me they would leave the grand business undone, after all."

"But one word more," I cried, giving my last look to the tower of Antonia, on which the eagles now glittered.

He anticipated me.

"All are safe—they are in the hands of Septimius, who will deal with them in honor. He solicited the command, that he might provide for their security. They comfort themselves with the hope that you will return. But return you never will. They will be happy in the hope—until sorrow is too long shut out to find room when it comes; they love you, and will love you long, but there is an end of all things. And now, farewell!"

"And now, onward," said I. "But every spot is crowded with the Roman columns. How am I to pass those spears?"

He laughed wildly, flung his arm round me, as of old, and ran, with the speed of a stag, round the foot of the hill to an unobstructed side. The ascent was nearly perpendicular; but he bounded up the crags without drawing a breath, placed me on a battlement, and was gone!

Below me war raged in its boundless fury. The enemy had forced their way, and the exasperated Jews, contemptuous of life, fought them with the rage of wild beasts. When the lance was broken, the knife was the weapon; when the knife failed, they tore with their hands and teeth. Masses of stone, torches, even dead bodies, everything that could minister to destruction, were hurled from the roofs on the assailants, who were often repulsed with deadly havoc. But they still made way; the courts of the Gentiles, of the Israelites, and of the priests were successively stormed; and the legions at length established themselves in front of the Sanctuary. A howl of wrath, at the possible profanation of the Holy of Holies, rose from the multitude. I rushed from the battle-

The Mark of Ruin

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This was the day of days, the ninth day of the month Ab, the anniversary of the burning of the Temple by the king of Babylon. One thousand one hundred and thirty years, seven months, and fifteen days were past, from its foundation by our great King Solomon! My attack had repelled the legionaries, and Titus, exhausted and dispirited, began to withdraw the routed columns from the front of the Temple. It was the fifth hour; the sun was scorching up their strength, and I looked proudly forward to victory and the preservation of the Temple!

As I was standing on the portal of the court of the Sanctuary, and gazing at the rout of the troops toward the tower

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But the legions rushed onward, crying out that "they were led by the Fates," and that "the God of the Jews had given His people and city into their hands." The torrent was irresistible. Titus rushed in at its head, exclaiming, that "the Divinity alone could have given the stronghold into his power, for it was beyond the hope and strength of man." My devoted companions were torn down in an instant. I was forced back to the veil of the Holy of Holies, fighting at random in the midst of the legionaries, who now saw no enemies but each other. In the fury of plunder they deluged the Portico and the Sanctuary with blood.

The golden table of Pompey, the golden vine, the trophies of Herod, were instantly torn away. Subordination was lost. The troops trampled upon their officers. Titus himself was saved only by cutting his way through those madmen. But I longed to die, and give my last breath and the last drop of my veins to the seat of Sanctity and Glory. I fought—I taunted—I heaped loud scorn on the profaners—I was covered from head to foot with gore; but it was from the hearts of Romans—I toiled for death; but I remained without a wound. Yet, wo to the life that came within the sweep of my simitar. The last blow that I struck was at an impious hand, put forth to grasp the veil that shut the Holy of Holies from the human gaze. The hand flew from the body, and the spoiler fell groaning at my feet. He sent up an expiring look, and I knew the countenance of my persecutor, Cestius!

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The Ruin of the Temple

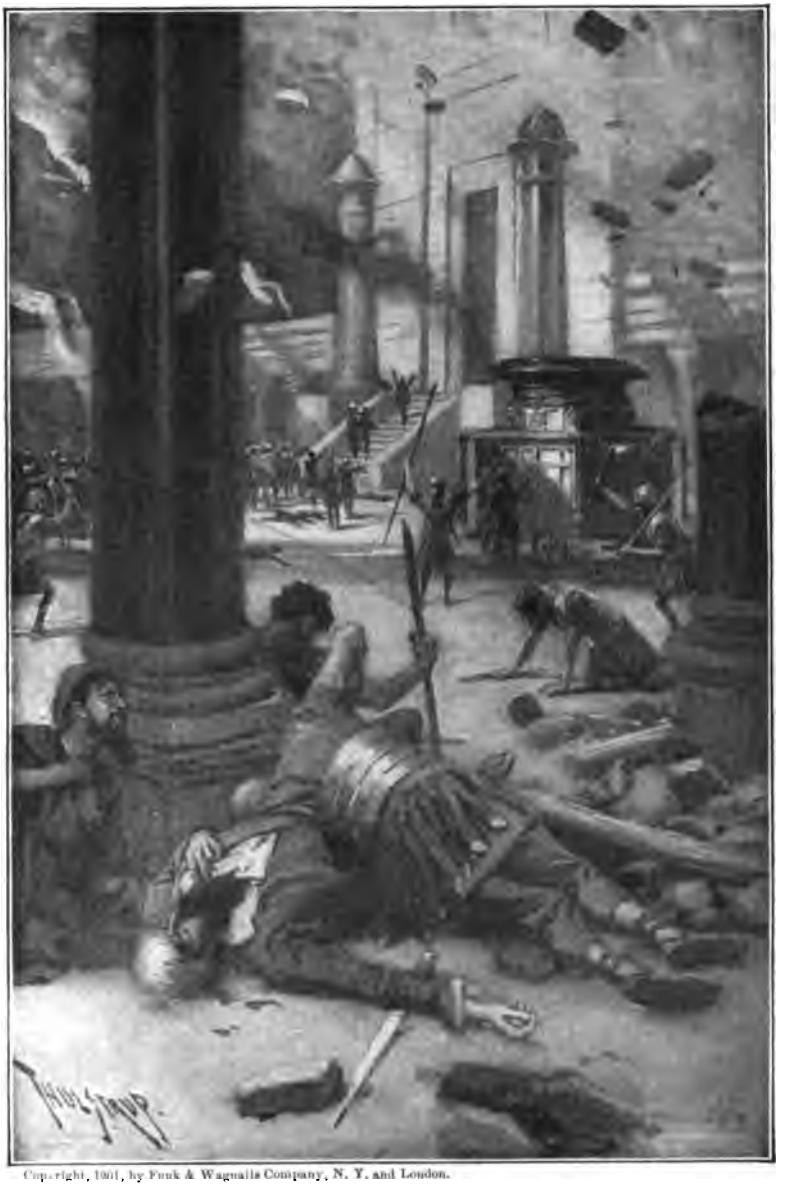
tuary. The Romans, appalled, fled to the portal; but they were doomed. A wall of fire stood before them. They rushed back, tore down the veil, and the Holy of Holies stood open. The blaze melted the plates of the roof in a golden shower above me. It calcined the marble floor; it dissipated in vapor the inestimable gems that studded the walls. All who entered lay turned to ashes. So perish the profaners! But on the sacred Ark the flame had no power. It whirled and swept in a red orb round the untouched symbol of the throne of thrones. Still I lived, but I felt my strength giving way: the heat withered my sinews—the flame extinguished my sight.

Bleeding, blind, frantic, I still fought until I sank under a heap of dead. In defiance of all prediction, I now believed my death inevitable. At once I heard the shouts of the conquerors and the fall of the pillars of the Temple. I welcomed the living grave! In all the wildness of the uproar I heard the voice: "TARRY THOU TILL I COME!" The world disappeared from before me!

Here I pause. I had undergone that portion of my unhappy career which was to be passed among my people. My life as father, husband, and citizen was at an end. Thenceforth I was to be a solitary being.

My fate had yet scarcely fallen upon me, but I was now to feel it in the disruption of every gentler tie that held me to life. I was to make my couch with the savage, the outcast, and the slave. I was to see the ruin of the mighty and the overthrow of empires. Yet in the tumult that changed the face of the world, I was still to live and be unchanged. Every sterner passion that disturbs our nature was to reign in successive tyranny over my soul. And fearfully was the decree fulfilled.

In revenge for the fall of Jerusalem, I traversed the globe to seek out an enemy of Rome. I found in the northern snows a man of blood; I stirred up the soul of Alaric and led him to the rock of Rome. In revenge for the insults heaped



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See page 532.

The Roar of Assault

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"Look to that mountain," was the answer, as he pointed to Moriah. Its side, covered with the legions advancing to the assault, shone in the sun like a tide of burning brass. "It is now a sight of splendid evil!" exclaimed he. "But upon that mountain shall yet be enthroned a Sovereign before whom the sun shall hide his head, and at the lifting of whose scepter the heaven and the heaven of heavens shall bow down! To that mountain shall man, and more than man, crowd for wisdom and happiness. From that mountain shall light flow to the ends of the universe, and the government shall be the Everlasting!"

The roar of the assault began, and my awful companion was recalled to the world.

on the Jew by the dotards and dastards of the city of Constantine, I sought out an instrument of compendious ruin: I found him in the Arabian sands, and poured ambition into the soul of the enthusiast of Mecca. In revenge for the pollution of the ruins of the Temple, I roused the iron tribes of the West, and at the head of the crusaders expelled the Saracens. I fed full on the revenge, and I felt the misery of revenge!

A passion for the mysteries of nature seized me. I toiled with the alchemist; I wore away years in perplexities of the schoolmen; and I felt the guilt and emptiness of unlawful knowledge.

A passion for human fame seized me. I drew my sword in the Italian wars—triumphed—was a monarch—and learned to curse the hour when I first dreamed of fame!

A passion for gold seized me. I felt the gnawing of avarice—the last infirmity of the fallen mind. Wealth came, to my wish and to my torment. In the midst of royal treasures I was poorer than the poorest. Days and nights of misery were the gift of avarice. I felt within me the undying worm. In my passion I longed for regions where the hand of man had never rifled the mine. I found a bold Genoese, and led him to the discovery of a new world. With its metals I inundated the old, and to my own misery added the misery of two hemispheres!

But the circle of the passions, a circle of fire, was not to surround my fated steps forever. Calmer and nobler aspirations were to rise in my melancholy heart. I saw the birth of true science, true liberty, and true wisdom. I lived with Petrarch, among his glorious relics of the genius of Greece and Rome. I stood enraptured beside the easel of Angelo and Raphael. I conversed with the merchant kings of the Mediterranean. I stood at Mentz beside the wonder-working machine that makes knowledge imperishable and sends it with winged speed through the earth. At the pulpit of the mighty man of Wittenberg I knelt; Israelite as I was, and am, I did voluntary homage to the mind of Luther!

But I must close these thoughts, as wandering as the steps

The Future

of my pilgrimage. I have more to tell—strange, magnificent, and sad.

But I must wait the impulse of my heart. Or, can the happy and the high-born, treading upon roses, have an ear for the story of the Exile, whose path has for a thousand years been in the brier and the thorn!

FINIS

APPENDIX

ANNOTATIONS

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In its deepest import, "the tradition is simply a wonderful picture of a people—a people forever suffering and yet undying; forever doomed to wander; without a home or any fixed abiding-place: safe nowhere, and yet immortal; trampled and beaten; robbed and persecuted, and yet, strangely, living and flourishing in spite of all. The most vigorous, virile, and healthful people under the sun; the bravest and most enduring in battle or siege; the most patriotic and loyal of all peoples, they stedfastly, through all their wanderings and sorrows, cling to a land which is but a memory or a dream."

In this story, Dr. Croly adds to the typical traditions, peculiar features of his own. Having such a hold on popular imagination, the Wandering Jew has figured very largely in fiction, particularly in the works of A. W. Schlegel, Klingemann, Béranger, Eugene Sue, Hans Christian Andersen, and others.

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FINIS

APPENDIX

A Glance toward the Temple

should be the foremost among the living? All Jerusalem in arms, and yet you scorn your time to gain laurels?"

The haughty and sarcastic tone was familiar to my recollection; but to see, as I did, a Roman soldier within a few feet of me was enough to make me spring up, and draw my simitar, careless of consequences.

"You ought to know me," said he, without moving a muscle; "for tho it is some years since we met, we have not been often asunder. And so here you have been sitting these twelve hours among corpses, to no better purpose than losing your time and your memory together!"

I looked round; the sun was in his meridian. The little band that I had led to the foot of the mountain were lying dead, to a man.

"Are you not a Roman?" I exclaimed.

"No; but I conclude that nearly as much absurdity and mischief may be committed under these trappings as under any other, and therefore I wear them. But you may exchange with me if you like. This cuirass and falchion will help you to money, riot, violence, and vice—and what more do nine-tenths of mankind ask for in their souls? Take my offer and you will be on the winning side; another thing that men like. But be expeditious, for before this sun dips his forehead in the Asphaltites, the bloodshed and robbery will be over."

His laugh, as he uttered the words, was bitterness itself, and I felt my flesh instinctively shudder. But a glance toward the Temple told me that the words were true. The legions had forced their way to the foot of the third and weakest rampart, which I now saw flying in pieces under the blows of the battering-rams. They must have marched by the very spot where I had sat since midnight, and I probably escaped only by being taken for one of the dead. I wrung my hands in agony. He burst into a wild roar of derision.

"What fools you lords of the creation are! What is the loss of life to the naked wretches that you see running about like frightened children on those battlements, or to the clothed wretches that you see ready to massacre them, for the honor and glory of a better-clothed wretch?—a dinner too

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"I must see the end of this battle," said he, in his old mixture of sarcasm and melancholy; "man's natural talent for making himself miserable may go far, but he is still the better for a teacher. On the top of that hill there are twenty thousand men panting for each other's blood like tigers; and yet without me they would leave the grand business undone, after all."

"But one word more," I cried, giving my last look to the tower of Antonia, on which the eagles now glittered.

He anticipated me.

"All are safe—they are in the hands of Septimius, who will deal with them in honor. He solicited the command, that he might provide for their security. They comfort themselves with the hope that you will return. But return you never will. They will be happy in the hope—until sorrow is too long shut out to find room when it comes; they love you, and will love you long, but there is an end of all things. And now, farewell!"

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But a new enemy had come, conqueror alike of the victor and the vanquished—fire." I heard its roar round the sanc-

The Ruin of the Temple

tuary. The Romans, appalled, fled to the portal; but they were doomed. A wall of fire stood before them. They rushed back, tore down the veil, and the Holy of Holies stood open. The blaze melted the plates of the roof in a golden shower above me. It calcined the marble floor; it dissipated in vapor the inestimable gems that studded the walls. All who entered lay turned to ashes. So perish the profaners! But on the sacred Ark the flame had no power. It whirled and swept in a red orb round the untouched symbol of the throne of thrones. Still I lived, but I felt my strength giving way: the heat withered my sinews—the flame extinguished my sight.

Bleeding, blind, frantic, I still fought until I sank under a heap of dead. In defiance of all prediction, I now believed my death inevitable. At once I heard the shouts of the conquerors and the fall of the pillars of the Temple. I welcomed the living grave! In all the wildness of the uproar I heard the voice: "TARRY THOU TILL I COME!" The world disappeared from before me!

Here I pause. I had undergone that portion of my unhappy career which was to be passed among my people. My life as father, husband, and citizen was at an end. Thenceforth I was to be a solitary being.

My fate had yet scarcely fallen upon me, but I was now to feel it in the disruption of every gentler tie that held me to life. I was to make my couch with the savage, the outcast, and the slave. I was to see the ruin of the mighty and the overthrow of empires. Yet in the tumult that changed the face of the world, I was still to live and be unchanged. Every sterner passion that disturbs our nature was to reign in successive tyranny over my soul. And fearfully was the decree fulfilled.

In revenge for the fall of Jerusalem, I traversed the globe to seek out an enemy of Rome. I found in the northern snows a man of blood; I stirred up the soul of Alaric and led him to the rock of Rome. In revenge for the insults heaped

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I heard the shouts of the conquerors, and the fall of the pillars of the Temple.

See page 532.

on the Jew by the dotards and dastards of the city of Constantine, I sought out an instrument of compendious ruin: I found him in the Arabian sands, and poured ambition into the soul of the enthusiast of Mecca. In revenge for the pollution of the ruins of the Temple, I roused the iron tribes of the West, and at the head of the crusaders expelled the Saracens. I fed full on the revenge, and I felt the misery of revenge!

Salathiel the Stern Wanderer

A passion for the mysteries of nature seized me. I toiled with the alchemist; I wore away years in perplexities of the schoolmen; and I felt the guilt and emptiness of unlawful knowledge.

A passion for human fame seized me. I drew my sword in the Italian wars—triumphed—was a monarch—and learned to curse the hour when I first dreamed of fame!

A passion for gold seized me. I felt the gnawing of avarice—the last infirmity of the fallen mind. Wealth came, to my wish and to my torment. In the midst of royal treasures I was poorer than the poorest. Days and nights of misery were the gift of avarice. I felt within me the undying worm. In my passion I longed for regions where the hand of man had never rifled the mine. I found a bold Genoese, and led him to the discovery of a new world. With its metals I inundated the old, and to my own misery added the misery of two hemispheres!

But the circle of the passions, a circle of fire, was not to surround my fated steps forever. Calmer and nobler aspirations were to rise in my melancholy heart. I saw the birth of true science, true liberty, and true wisdom. I lived with Petrarch, among his glorious relics of the genius of Greece and Rome. I stood enraptured beside the easel of Angelo and Raphael. I conversed with the merchant kings of the Mediterranean. I stood at Mentz beside the wonder-working machine that makes knowledge imperishable and sends it with winged speed through the earth. At the pulpit of the mighty man of Wittenberg I knelt; Israelite as I was, and am, I did voluntary homage to the mind of Luther!

But I must close these thoughts, as wandering as the steps

The Future

of my pilgrimage. I have more to tell—strange, magnificent, and sad.

But I must wait the impulse of my heart. Or, can the happy and the high-born, treading upon roses, have an ear for the story of the Exile, whose path has for a thousand years been in the brier and the thorn!

FINIS

APPENDIX

ANNOTATIONS

1—page 3. The legend of the Wandering Jew first appeared in the thirteenth century, in the chronicle of Matthew of Paris, who professes to have received his information from an Armenian bishop to whom the hero had himself communicated the events. According to this version, he was a servant in the house of Pilate, named Cartaphilus, and gave Christ a blow as He was dragged out of the palace to execution. Another and perhaps more familiar version, probably of the fifteenth century and of German origin, states that he was a shoemaker named Ahasuerus. As Jesus bore His cross along the *via dolorosa*, staggering with pain and weakness, He leaned for a moment against the doorway of the rude shopkeeper, who, with cursing and bitterness, ordered him to "go on." The sufferer looked upon him and said: "I go, but tarry thou till I come!" From that awful moment he found life a burden and death an impossibility. From time to time he was able to rejoice in gray hairs and a stooping form, but regularly these indications of the end would vanish, and clothed again in the form of youth, he felt the look and heard in his soul the dread voice bidding him wander on and on forever. All versions agree touching the verdict of Christ, that he should wander on earth till the Second Coming.

In its deepest import, "the tradition is simply a wonderful picture of a people—a people forever suffering and yet undying; forever doomed to wander; without a home or any fixed abiding-place: safe nowhere, and yet immortal; trampled and beaten; robbed and persecuted, and yet, strangely, living and flourishing in spite of all. The most vigorous, virile, and healthful people under the sun: the bravest and most enduring in battle or siege; the most patriotic and loyal of all peoples, they stedfastly, through all their wanderings and sorrows, cling to a land which is but a memory or a dream."

In this story, Dr. Croly adds to the typical traditions, peculiar features of his own. Having such a hold on popular imagination, the Wandering Jew has figured very largely in fiction, particularly in the works of A. W. Schlegel, Klingemann, Béranger, Eugene Sue, Hans Christian Andersen, and others.

2—page 11. The Mount of Corruption lay to the south of Jerusalem, across the Valley of Hinnom. Its summit looks down upon the spot in connection with which the Jewish ideas of the future life of the wicked were formed. The valley, named, according to Dean Stanley, from "some ancient hero, the son of Hinnom," is first mentioned in Joshua (xv. 8; xviii. 16), in marking out the boundary-line between Judah and Benjamin. Solomon erected high places there for Moloch (1 Kings xi. 7), whose horrid rites were revived by later idolatrous kings. Ahaz and Manassah made their children "pass through the fire" in this valley (2 Kings xvi. 3; 2 Chron. xxviii. 3; xxxiii. 6); and the fiendish custom of sacrificing infants to the fire-gods seems to have been kept up for some time in Tophet, its southeastern extremity (Jer. vii. 31; 2 Kings xxiii. 10). To put an end to these abominations, Josiah polluted the place to render it ceremonially unclean (2 Kings xxiii. 10, 13, 14; 2 Chron. xxxiv. 4, 5), and it became the common cesspool of the city, and the laystall where all the solid filth was collected.

3—page 16. It is difficult to conceive of the magnificence and the extent of the Temple, as rebuilt by Herod, one of the greatest royal builders that ever lived. Edersheim calls it "a palace, a fortress, a sanctuary of shining marble and glittering gold." Of it the Jewish tradition ran: "He that has not seen the Temple of Herod, has never

known what beauty is." As the pilgrim ascended the Mount, crested by that symmetrically proportioned building, which could hold within its gigantic girdle not fewer than 210,000 persons, his wonder might well increase at every step. The Mount itself seemed like an island, abruptly rising from out deep valleys, surrounded by a sea of walls, palaces, streets, and houses, and crowned by a mass of snowy marble and glittering gold, rising terrace upon terrace. Altogether it measured a square of about one thousand feet.

4—page 16. The High Priest was Caiaphas, before whom Jesus had just been on trial. The beginning of the public ministry of Jesus was contemporaneous with the accession of Pontius Pilate to the procuratorship and the appointment of Caiaphas by Pilate to the high priesthood. Under the administration of Pilate, Roman rule reached the deepest depths in "venality, violence, robbery, persecutions, wanton, malicious insults, judicial murders without even the formality of a legal process, and cruelty." History records of Caiaphas that he was appointed High Priest, not because of his piety—the Talmud describes in terrible language the "gross self-indulgence, violence, luxury, and even public indecency" of the high priests of that day—but because in him was found "a sufficiently submissive instrument of Roman tyranny." The irreverence here displayed is the natural expression of an utterly godless nature, and the supernatural events that centered in that crucifixion hour could not have failed to call forth such manifest feelings of horror.

5—page 18. The supernatural events mentioned in the narrative are recorded by the evangelists, and confirmed by tradition and contemporaneous history, as having occurred in connection with the Crucifixion—deep darkness enveloped the earth from the sixth hour to the ninth hour of the day; the veil of the Temple that shut in the Holy of Holies was rent from top to bottom; and a mighty earthquake terrified the multitudes. Lange has well said: "The moment when Christ, the creative Prince, the principle of life to humanity, and the word, expires, convulses the whole physical world." Dr. Philip Schaff has said: "The darkness was designed to exhibit the amazement of nature, and of the God of nature, at the wickedness of the Crucifixion of Him who is the light of the world and the sun of righteousness." The horror from such dense darkness is brought out powerfully by Lord Byron in his dream of "Darkness." The extent and character of the Temple-Veil will account for the fact that it produced so profound an impression when it was seen rent from top to bottom and hanging in two parts from its fastenings above and at the side. The Veils before the most Holy Place were sixty feet long, and thirty wide, of the thickness of the palm of the hand, and wrought in seventy-two squares joined together. They were so heavy that it was said that three hundred priests were needed to manipulate them. The rending was seen to be the work of God's own hand.

6—page 23. The description of the priests and their residences would indicate an ideal condition. When the Israelites settled in Canaan, Joshua assigned to the priestly families thirteen cities of residence, with "suburbs" or pasture-grounds for their flocks (Josh. xxi. 18-19). The Levites were scattered over all the country, but the cities of the priests were all near Jerusalem and embraced within the bounds of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin. When the priests were divided into twenty-four courses, each course officiated a week at a time. The interval of twenty-three weeks, between the successive times of service of a course, was a time for home life and high-priestly pursuits. The opportunities for leisurely culture were undoubtedly very great. In addition to the large number residing at this time in these priestly cities, who took their turn in the courses, there were no less than 24,000 stationed permanently at Jerusalem, and 12,000 at Jericho; so that it was a tradition among the Jews "that it had never fallen to the lot of any priest to offer incense twice." Their proportion to the number of the people must, therefore, have been much greater than that of the clergy has ever been in any Christian nation. Their leisure and opportunities for culture, especially in the Sacred Books, must have been exceptional. The number of the priestly class was doubtless increased through intermarriage with the other tribes. Salathiel was a priest, and hence a Levite; but he was also connected with the tribe of Naphtali, through marriage of a daughter of that tribe; so that when consciousness returned he found himself being

borne, not by his priestly associates to the cities of the priests about Jerusalem, but by his tribal kinsmen to the domain of Naphtali under the shadows of Lebanon.

7—page 26. Before the Roman conquest, the hatred of the Samaritan for the Jew made Samaria largely a land of brigands, through which a Jew could not safely travel. To Herod the Great belongs the credit of breaking up this brigandage, so far as it was an organized system. Josephus relates that Herod, after taking Sepphoris, the metropolis of Galilee, "hasted away to the robbers that were in the caves, who overran a great part of the country, and did as great mischief to its inhabitants as war itself could have done." He defeated them with a great slaughter, and drove them out of the land.

8—page 28. The region through which the caravan was passing not only brought them in view of the scenes of many of the greatest events in Jewish history, individual and national—Mounts Carmel and Gilboa and Tabor and Hermon, and the theater of patriarchal and prophetic activity—but across what has been the battle-field for the armies of the world-empires of three continents as they have crossed and recrossed, from the days of Abraham down through the Crusades. It is aptly designated "a living history of Providence."

9—page 33. The "Haphtorah" (Isa. liii.) contains the most graphic Old-Testament picture of Jesus as the rejected, suffering atoning Messiah. It was this that the Ethiopian eunuch of Queen Candace was reading when Philip went up to him in his chariot (Acts viii. 29), and by the explanation of which he was converted to the Christian faith. Through its wonderful picture Eleazar seems already to have been led to look upon Jesus as the Messiah; but his hopes, roused by Salathiel's renunciation of the priesthood, were dashed in finding that the veil was still over the face of the latter, as it was over the many of Israel.

10—page 43. Jubal is a typical Israelitish mountaineer, hunter, and warrior in one, combining with a sense of wild freedom a touch of the ancient Jewish enthusiasm. The incident here narrated gives a glimpse of his deeper nature, and his outburst of patriotic exultation at sight of the grave of the hosts of Sisera was one in which every true Israelite could join.

11—page 47. The life of a whole generation is passed in inactivity after the home is made in Naphtali—an inactivity that served to deepen the shadow of his doom and the remorse for his unspeakable crime. In this period the preparation is being made for the final conflict of Jew with Roman authority, and at the end of it Salathiel is thrust, by a malevolent power, into the leadership in that desperate first struggle, described by Josephus, that promised to sweep the Romans from Judea. His fate, however, pursues him, and he languishes for years in a dungeon—leaving the Jews, now without competent leadership, again under Roman control and oppression.

12—page 51. Antiochus IV., king of Syria—the son of Antiochus the Great—known in history as Epiphanes the Illustrious, but to many of his contemporaries as Epimanes the Madman—was for ages the chief name of horror to the Jews. His father had conquered Palestine, B.C. 203, and his brother and predecessor, Seleucus Philopator, had plundered the Temple, and Syria had disputed the control of the land with Egypt. Epiphanes conquered Jerusalem, B.C. 169, and held it for three years and a half. The obstinate resistance of the Jews led to the most dreadful deeds of cruelty recorded in history. Those who adhered to Ptolemy were mercilessly butchered. He plundered the city and the Temple. He forbade the Jewish religion, tore up and burned the Sacred Scriptures, put a stop to the daily Sacrifice of expiation, and dedicated the Temple to Zeus Olympios. He compelled the people to keep their infants uncircumcised, and to sacrifice swine's flesh upon the altar. Kurtz says: "This was the abomination of desolation in the Holy Place, spoken of by Daniel (ch. xi. 31)—a type of another desolation that still belonged to the future (Matt. xxiv. 15)"—before the Second Coming of Christ. Added to all the rest, his system of unspeakable barbarities and horrible tortures at length drove the people to desperation, and led to the successful uprising and heroic struggle for freedom under Judas the Maccabee—truly God's hammer—and his brothers (recorded in the

Apocryphal books bearing that name). Help in understanding the Jewish feeling toward Antiochus may be found in Josephus, Prideaux, Edersheim, etc.

13—page 61. Eleazar, as he appears in the narrative, is not the real name of a historic leader of the Jews at this time. Josephus, indeed, speaks of a certain Jew "who was called Eleazar, and was born at Saab, in Galilee. This man took up a stone of great size, and threw it down from the wall upon the ram, and this with so great a force that it broke off the head of the engine. He also leaped down and took up the head of the ram from the midst of them, and, without any concern, carried it to the top of the wall, and this, while he stood as a fit mark to be pelted by all his enemies." Disregarding his many wounds, he showed himself a hero in other daring exploits, like some of those attributed by the author to Salathiel.

Josephus tells also of another Eleazar, who, at the time when the Jews took the fortress of Masada by treachery, was the governor of the Temple. He was the son of Ananias, the High Priest, and was a very bold youth. He "persuaded those that officiated in the divine service to receive no gift or sacrifice from any foreigner. And this," adds Josephus, "was the true beginning of our war with the Romans; for they rejected the sacrifice of Cæsar on this account."

The real leader in this early Jewish war was, however, Flavius Josephus, the historian. After the destruction of the army of Cestius Gallus in A.D. 66, the patriots precipitated a revolution, and Josephus was sent to organize the defense of Galilee. He led in the desperate struggle against Vespasian, but fell into the hands of the Romans after the fall of the stronghold of Jotapata and the subsequent massacre there. He saved himself by predicting the future elevation of Vespasian to the imperial throne. He was present in the Roman army at the destruction of Jerusalem, and accompanied Titus to Rome, where he resided for the rest of his life. He was a great leader, and Salathiel in his exploits often seems to personate him.

14—page 64. Onias is not brought forward as a historical character, but as the representative of a class of Jews who were equally treacherous in their dealings with their patriotic countrymen and with the Romans. He appears as one of the marplots of the history—the personification of hatred and malice—from this council of war until the final catastrophe, when he dies by the hand of Jubal. The speech which the writer puts in his mouth was, however, undoubtedly suggested by the remarkable oration, recorded by Josephus (Bk. II., ch. xvi.), which Agrippa (the same mentioned in the Acts) addressed to the Jews, in the gallery adjoining the Temple and in the presence of his sister Bernice, who was above in the palace of the Asmoneans, and in which he sought to dissuade the people from going to war with their oppressors. In this speech of Agrippa we have "an authentic account of the extent and strength of the Roman empire when the Jewish war began," from which becomes the more apparent the madness that hurried the Jews to their final destruction.

15—page 70. In these foreglimpses of national doom, the representative character of Salathiel is brought out and the sense of his own personal doom, as the arch-crucifier of Jesus, deepened.

16—page 72. It has often been remarked that the selection of Judea as the home of the chosen people bears the marks of divine wisdom. At the point where the three continents of the ancient world meet, surrounded by desert, mountain, and sea, broken by rugged ranges and defiles impassable in the face of even a small opposing force, and filled with a dense population, it was not only unique in character but impregnable to foreign foe so long as Israel remained faithful to its covenant with Jehovah. When the barriers, which at first excluded the people from the outside world in their earlier development, were broken down, it became the one place from which all the world was most accessible for the spread of the Hebrew Theism and of Christianity.

17—page 74. The Year of Jubilee, recurring every fiftieth year, was a remarkable feature of the Jewish system. It was inaugurated on the Day of Atonement with the blowing of trumpets throughout the land, and by a proclamation of universal liberty. Its main provisions were: (1) The soil was left uncultivated and the chance produce

was free to all comers. (2) Every Israelite recovered his right to the land originally allotted to the family to which he belonged, if he, or his ancestor, had parted with it. Houses in walled cities were an exception, altho these were redeemable at any time within a full year of the time of sale. (3) All Israelites who had become slaves, either to their own countrymen or to resident foreigners, were set free in the Jubilee. Josephus states that in his time all debts were remitted in the Year of Jubilee. It was a wonderful provision for preventing the accumulation of inordinate wealth in the hands of the few, and for relieving and giving new opportunity to those whom misfortune or fault had reduced to poverty. (See Smith's Bible Dictionary.)

18—page 75. Small as was Judea—no larger than one of our smaller States—it yet has the distinction of embracing within its bounds the temperatures and productions of all climes. Notwithstanding the covenant unfaithfulness of its people and their failure in obedience to Jehovah, it is still true that it bequeathed to mankind all the forms of Theism—Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism—and with and through them the chief enlightening and power-giving influences since operative among the nations. It is not, then, too much to say that, with faithfulness to God and to its unequaled privileges, "Judea might have changed the earth into a paradise."

19—page 79. The elevation of Salathiel to the leadership, as the Prince of Naphtali, in the war now decided upon, seems contrary to the natural order, as he was a priest and allied to the tribe of Naphtali by marriage merely; but the plea that it was a holy war prevailed, and the superhuman qualities that had been manifested in him clearly marked him for the position. The exaltation and exultation were to be simply the prelude to a sharp recall to a deeper sense of the curse that was upon him, and upon all else because of his crime.

20—page 84. The blow was a critical one for Judea, depriving it of its leader at the moment when that leader was most needed. It likewise dashed the high hopes of the leader and left him a madman, a prey to the wildest imagination that swept him through earth and sky, leaving him at last, for periods beyond all counting, the sleepless, conscious, vivid victim of misery unspeakable.

21—page 93. The grove known as the Cedars of Lebanon consists of about 400 trees, standing in a depression of the mountain, quite apart from all other trees. The trees are about 6,500 feet above the sea, and 3,000 below the summit. About 37 of these are large and old, the 11 or 12 older ones being of immense size and each spreading itself widely round from several trunks, and reaching back in time 3,500 and more years—beyond Solomon and Abraham. They are naturally looked upon with much reverence by the natives of the region as living records of the glory of Solomon. The Maronite patriarch was formerly accustomed to celebrate there the festival of the Transfiguration at an altar of rough stones. In later years a chapel has been erected on the spot. The references of the author are to an earlier, and usually idolatrous, worship. Bands of robbers, such as that described, naturally sought the vicinity of such gatherings.

22—page 97. The worship of the robbers at Lebanon illustrates the ease with which the Oriental mind conjoins religion with any form of villainy. This, however, is likely to be a feature of any religion that is a mere superstition.

23—page 103. These Greek Christian hermits, dwelling apart from men in their rocky cavern, are a fair type of thousands of such bands, driven by the terrible persecutions of the Roman Emperor to take refuge in the bowels of the earth. They were often made up of the noblest and best of souls that most readily responded to the call and the ideal of Christianity. A similar state continued during much of the time until, in the age of Constantine, the Christians became so numerous as to be able to change from a policy of inaction to one of aggressive self-defense.

24—page 113. History records the facts of Roman corruption and degeneracy during this period. During the absence of Salathiel, the oppression and extortion had maddened the Jews and reached a point beyond endurance. There resulted a succession of partial and premature uprisings. The empire everywhere seemed falling into decay,

and preparing for dissolution; the evils and the evil line of rulers culminated in the administration of Gessius Florus.

25—page 133. It was Gessius Florus who, by his barbarity in governing, finally forced the Jews into war. Josephus, contrasting him with Albinus, pictures Florus as a human monster: "Altho such was the character of Albinus, yet did Gessius Florus, who succeeded him, demonstrate him to have been a most excellent person, upon the comparison; for the former did the greatest part of his roguerics in private, and with a sort of dissimulation; but Gessius did his unjust actions to the harm of the nation after a pompous manner; and as tho he had been sent as an executioner to punish condemned malefactors, he omitted no sort of rapine, or of vexation; where the case was really pitiable he was most barbarous, and in things of the greatest turpitude he was most impudent. Nor could any one outdo him in disguising the truth, nor could any one contrive more subtle ways of deceit than he did. He indeed thought it but a petty offense to get money out of simple persons; so he spoiled whole cities and ruined entire bodies of men at once, and did almost publicly proclaim it all the country over that they had liberty given them to turn robbers, upon this condition: that he might go shares with them in the spoils they got. Accordingly, this, his greediness of gain, was the occasion that entire toparchies were brought to desolation, and a great many of the people left their own country and fled into foreign provinces."

26—page 145. In the Prophet Daniel's vision the Roman world-empire was represented by iron, which dashed and broke in pieces all else. It is the wont to say that Rome had a genius for conquest and empire. Among the nations she represented power and law, as Greece represented culture and Judea religion. The Roman was lacking in the culture and religion needed to refine and control his rugged nature; hence, his drift toward the animal and brutal, and toward the outward show of life. Corruption was already far on its way, and was only delayed for a time by the spread and prevalence of the Christian faith.

27—page 147. Nero was Emperor from A.D. 54 to A.D. 68. He was a nephew of Caligula, and was adopted by Claudius in A.D. 50. Even his own age, which had borne and nurtured him, regarded him in his later career a monster. He killed those whom he feared, among them his own mother and Britannicus, the son of Claudius, and rightful heir to the throne; those who stood in the way of his whims, as his first two wives, Octavia and Poppæa Sabina; and at last he killed everybody who attracted his attention. Under him occurred the insurrection of the Jews, put down by Vespasian, in which Josephus so ably led his countrymen. The conflagration in July, 64, in which two-thirds of Rome was destroyed, is believed to have been the work of Nero, who is said to have shown his indifference by playing the "Siege of Troy" on his fiddle while watching the flames from a high tower in his palace. He wantonly accused the Christians of setting it on fire, and sentenced them to be clad in tarred garments, set on fire, and driven as flaming torches through the streets of Rome. A conspiracy formed against him in A.D. 65 failed, and he sacrificed his old instructor, Seneca, and the philosopher's nephew, the poet Lucan, the author of "Pharsalia"; but one formed in A.D. 68, extending over Gaul, Spain, and Rome itself, overwhelmed the tyrant on his return from a journey in Greece, where he had appeared as a singer on the stage, and drove him to despair and to suicide in June of that year.

28—page 149. "Married, but not mated," could not have been said of Nero, at least in the later years of his life. He had early married Octavia, the daughter of Claudius, his adopted father; but afterward became enslaved by the charms of a mistress, Acte, a beautiful freedwoman, who was content to be merely the Emperor's plaything. In the year 58, Poppæa Sabina took the place of Acte. The new favorite was not satisfied, however, to be merely the plaything of Nero; she was resolved to be his wife. With consummate skill she set herself at once to remove the obstacles that stood in her way. By playing upon the passions and fears of Nero she accomplished her diabolical purposes. She wrought him up to a passion of hatred against Agrippina, his mother, and she was murdered. The trusted advisers of the Emperor were one by one made way with. Octavia, his wife, daughter of Claudius, now long neglected, was divorced, banished, and barbarously murdered. Poppæa's triumph was now complete. "She was

formally married to Nero; her head appeared on the coins side by side with his; and her statue appeared in the public places of Rome." Her career shows her to have been anything but a "dove in a vulture's talons." Poppæa died in the autumn of the year 65, just after the great conflagration, and a little before the great pestilence consequent upon it.

29—page 160. The dying appeal of the martyr St. Paul—whose name is not mentioned—is depicted with a delicacy rarely if ever seen in the present-day handling of sacred subjects in secular romances.

30—page 173. The account given by the historian Tacitus, in his "Annals," of the origin of the Christians, of their persecution, and of the satiating of the popular rage, is of peculiar interest as illustrating this narrative. Of the Christians, Tacitus says:

"This name was derived from one 'Christus,' who was executed in the reign of Tiberius by the procurator of Judea, Pontius Pilate; and this accursed superstition, for a moment repressed, broke forth again, not only through Judea, the source of evil, but even through the city, whither all things outrageous and shameful flow together and find many adherents. Accordingly those were first arrested who confessed, afterward a vast number upon their information, who were convicted, not so much on the charge of causing the fire, as for their hatred to the human race. To their execution there were added such mockeries as that they were wrapped in the skins of wild beasts and torn in pieces by dogs, or crucified, or set on fire and burnt, when daylight ended, as torches by night. Nero lent his own gardens for the spectacle, and gave a chariot race, at which he mingled freely with the multitude in the garb of a driver or mounted on his chariot. As the result of all, a feeling of compassion arose for the sufferers, tho guilty and deserving of condign punishment, on the ground that they were destroyed not for the common good, but to gratify the cruelty of one man."

31—page 187. "Unconquerable fortresses" proclaimed the name and sway of Herod the Great. Among these were Essebonitis and Machærus in Peræa, and Alexandreian, Herodion, Hyrcania, and Masada in Southeastern Judea, near the shore of the Dead Sea. According to the description of Masada by Josephus:

"There was a rock not small in circumference, and very high. It was encompassed with valleys of such vast depth downward that the eye could not reach their bottoms; they were abrupt, and such as no animal could walk upon, excepting at two places of the rock, where it subsides, in order to afford a passage for ascent, tho not without difficulty. Now, of the ways that lead to it, one is that from the Lake Asphaltitis, toward the sunrising, and another on the west, where the ascent is easier; the one of these ways called the Serpent, as resembling that animal in its narrowness and its perpetual windings; for it is broken off at the prominent precipice of the rock, and returns frequently into itself, and lengthening again by little and little, hath much ado to proceed forward; and he that would walk along it must first go on one leg, and then on the other; there is also nothing but destruction in case your feet slip; for on each side there is a vastly deep chasm and precipice, sufficient to quell the courage of everybody by the terror it infuses into the mind. When, therefore, a man had gone along this way for thirty furlongs, the rest is the top of the hill, not ending at a small point, but is no other than a plain upon the highest part of the mountain. Upon this top of the hill, Jonathan, the High Priest, first of all built a fortress and called it Masada; after which the rebuilding of this place employed the care of King Herod to a great degree."

32—page 233. It was in Masada that Herod the Great, when he fled to Rome to appeal to Antony, had left his mother, sister, and children. In later years, after he had been established in the kingdom by order of Rome, he rebuilt, strengthened, and beautified the fortress. Soon after Florus, by his extortion and cruelty, had driven the Jews to rebellion, history records that Masada was taken by surprise, and the Roman garrison put to the sword. This is the historical basis of this chapter of the story.

33—page 247. Josephus follows his description of the fortress of Masada by an account of Herod's palace, that justifies the description here given, and reveals the motive of the king in its construction:

"Moreover, he built a palace therein at the western ascent; it was within and beneath the walls of the citadel, but inclined to its north side. Now the wall of this palace was very high and strong, and had at its four corners towers sixty cubits high. The furniture, also, of the edifices, and of the cloisters, and of the baths, was of great variety and was very costly; and these buildings were supported by pillars of single stones on every side:

the walls also, and the floors of the edifices were paved with stones of several colors. . . . As for the furniture that was within this fortress, it was still more wonderful, on account of its splendor and long continuance. . . . There was also found here a large quantity of all sorts of weapons of war, which had been treasured up by that king, and were sufficient for ten thousand men; there were cast-iron, and brass, and tin: which show that he had taken much pains to have all things here ready for the greatest occasions; for the report goes, how Herod thus prepared this fortress on his own account, as a refuge against two kinds of danger: the one for fear of the multitude of the Jews, lest they should depose him, and restore their former kings to the government; the other danger was greater and more terrible, which arose from Cleopatra, queen of Egypt, who did not conceal her intentions, but spake often to Antony, and desired him to cut off Herod, and entreated him to bestow the kingdom of Judea upon her. And certainly it is a great wonder that Antony did never comply with her commands in this point, as he was so miserably enslaved to his passion for her; nor should any one have been surprised if she had been gratified in such her request. So the fear of these dangers made Herod rebuild Masada, and thereby leave it for the finishing stroke of the Romans in this Jewish war."

34—page 253. The record of history at the basis of this part of the narrative is, that immediately after the capture of Masada, "Manahem—a younger son of the celebrated Judas of Galilee, who had perished in a revolt soon after the exile of Archelaus, leaving to a powerful party the watchword, 'We have no king but God,'—proclaimed himself the leader of the zealots and marched upon Jerusalem. The outworks of the palace were mined and burned, and the garrison capitulated. The Jews and the troops of Agrippa were allowed to depart; the Roman soldiers retired to the three strong towers built by Herod, and all left in the palace were put to death. The success was followed by the execution of the High Priest Ananias and his brother, who were found hidden in an aqueduct; but these and other excesses displeased the people; and when Manahem proceeded to assume the royal diadem, he was put to death by the partizans of Eleazar. In him the insurgents lost the only hope of a competent leader. The Roman soldiers in the towers were soon compelled to surrender on promise of their lives; but they had no sooner piled their arms than they were cut to pieces. This baptism of blood, by which the zealots committed themselves to a war of extermination, which they at the same time deprived of the dignity of a patriotic struggle, was perpetrated on a Sabbath; and on the same day the Jews of Cesarea were massacred by the Greeks to the number of 20,000. These deeds mark the character of the conflict, not only as an insurrection of Judea against the Romans, but as an internecine struggle of the Jewish and Greek races in Palestine and the neighboring lands."—*Philip Smith*, "History of the World."

35—page 254. These Mosaic regulations for exemption from war are found in Deut. xx. They are unique and peculiar to the Jewish code.

36—page 263. The historian records that the capture of Jerusalem brought down the Romans upon the insurgents:

"Cestius Gallus, the governor of Syria, set his forces in motion, with the forces of Agrippa, who had now openly taken the Roman side, and other allies, added to his Roman legions. He advanced upon Jerusalem through the pass of Bethhoron, at the season of the Feast of Tabernacles, A.D. 66, with an army of 25,000 men. Regardless alike of the feast and of the Sabbath, the Jews rushed out to meet the enemy on the spot consecrated by the victories of Joshua and Judas Maccabeus; crushed the Roman van with the slaughter of more than 500 men, and with a loss of only 22. A charge of light troops on the Jewish rear saved the army of Cestius from destruction, and gave him time to entrench his camp, and the Jews were obliged to retire to Jerusalem." Cestius then advanced and encamped at Scopus, a mile to the north of the city. After five days of irregular attacks, he advanced against the northern wall of the Temple and began the work of mining; but, notwithstanding encouragements from the factions in the city, he suddenly and unaccountably withdrew, and, after a night's rest on Scopus, "commenced his retreat with the hostile population gathering round him at every step, and reached Gabas with loss. Here the beasts of burden were killed and the baggage abandoned. As soon as the Romans had entered the pass of Bethhoron, they were assailed in flank and rear and the passage blocked in front. Night alone saved them from utter destruction; and Cestius, displaying the standards and leaving 400 men, to make a show of defending the empty camp, fled with the remnant of his army, pursued by the Jews as far as Antipatris. He lost 5,300 foot and 380 horses; and the engines of war, which he had carried up for the siege of Jerusalem, became an invaluable help to

its defense. Having secured this prize, and collected the immense booty, the Jews returned to the city with hymns of triumph, fancying that the days of the Maccabees had returned, and forgetting that the power they had defied wielded the resources of the whole civilized world, while they had forfeited the aid of Omnipotence."—*Philip Smith.*

37—page 276. It was during this interval, in which the Jews were without competent leadership, that the Romans made and carried forward their plans for conquering Judea. The news of the revolt and the defeat of Cestius reached Nero when he was on his theatrical tour of Greece. He at once entrusted Vespasian (afterward Emperor) with the command of all the forces of Syria and the East. Vespasian immediately "sent his son Titus to Alexandria, to lead the fifteenth legion into Palestine, while he hastened through Asia Minor and Syria, collecting troops and engines as he advanced. In the spring of the following year, three legions, with a large force of allies, were assembled at Ptolemais (Acre). The sense of being committed to so great a conflict, and the six-months' interval for preparation, had restored some order among the still divided Jews. The avowed friends of Rome had either taken refuge with her armies or been compelled to join the insurgents." So writes the historian. In the interval the moderate party, who would have been content to acknowledge the supremacy of Rome if their liberties were secured, had, by their numbers and character, obtained the ascendency over the zealots.

38—page 280. Jubal appears in this strange manner, after two years had been passed in the dungeon, and rehearses the story of the war. The attack of Vespasian fell first upon Galilee, which lay in his way to Jerusalem. The moderate party had placed Joseph, the son of Matthias—better known as the author of "Jewish Antiquities," and by his Roman name, Flavius Josephus, which he later assumed, as the client of Vespasian—in command in Galilee. His account given in "The Jewish War" proves that the horrors of the conflict in Galilee were not overdrawn by Jubal. Josephus, who was undoubtedly possessed of military genius of no mean order, was driven at last to stake the fate of Galilee on the defense of Jotapata. Before it Vespasian was wounded, but the hill-fortress was finally stormed. The story of the marvelous escape of the Jewish leader and of his recapture is related by himself. He was thereafter attached to the suite of Vespasian "in a character between a prisoner and a companion; and, after acting throughout the war as a mediator between his countrymen and the Romans, he was rewarded with a grant of land in Judea, together with a pension and the Roman franchise." Some of the most interesting features in Dr. Croly's romance would seem to have been suggested by experiences in the life of Josephus. The horrors of the war were indescribable. Toward the close of the Galilean campaign, Trajan was despatched by Vespasian to seize Joppa, the only port held by the Jews. "Here the unfortunate inhabitants took to their ships, which were dashed to pieces by a storm, and the few survivors killed by the Romans as they gained the land. At the other captured cities (Tiberias, Taricheia, Gamala, Itabyrium, and Gischala) all the elder inhabitants were massacred and the younger sold as slaves. Never was a war marked by greater atrocities on both sides than that which now desolated the Holy Land."

39—page 284. The numerous caves, owing to the chalky limestone of which the rocks of Syria and Palestine chiefly consist, are one of the marked features of this region. The Scriptures are full of references to them, as they were used for dwelling-places, burial-places, places of refuge, and other purposes. The bold shores of the Mediterranean, affording as they do so little good harborage, are well suited to furnish caverns, approachable from the sea only, in which the robber band is represented as holding its orgies.

40—page 291. Such a robber group was not uncommon in that age, made up as it was of such diverse races and dispositions. The corruption of the Roman rule under Nero brought an approach to anarchy in many of the provinces. Owing to the favorable character of its topography and the strange mixture of its population, Palestine, and indeed the whole Syrian shore of the Mediterranean, was at the worst in this regard. Robbery, by sea and by land, was so widely practised as to gather to itself a degree of respectability not usually associated with it. German, Chiote, Syrian, Arab, Egyptian,

and Ethiopian, all develop here in the most marked way, under the influence of overmuch wine, their national idiosyncrasies and their natural quarrelsomeness.

41—page 328. This chance meeting with Naomi, the granddaughter of Ananus, the late High Priest, furnishes the key to many of the situations and strange adventures of the closing volume of this romance. It was during the period of Salathiel's incarceration in the dungeon, and while Vespasian was pushing on to Jerusalem, that the death of Ananus occurred. Josephus represents Ananus, or Annus, as a man who might have saved the nation from destruction. At this time he shared the supreme power in Jerusalem, under the Sanhedrin, with Simon, the son of Garion, the bravest of the zealots, the moderate party being thus the controlling power in the city. Later, however, when the tide of devastation directed by Vespasian had entirely swept over Galilee and Perea, the death of Nero brought a brief respite until Vespasian himself had been chosen Emperor. Meanwhile the efforts of Ananus to make preparation for defense were paralyzed by the zealots. The historian relates how "Jerusalem became the refuge and sink of the fugitives from every quarter. Crowds brought fresh confusion, and added to the fatal power of the zealots. At length John of Giscala arrived, with his panting men and horses, from the fall of the last Galilean fortress. In spite of the tale which their appearance told, the crafty leader announced that the Romans were exhausted, and pointed to the long resistance of the northern cities as a presage of their failure before Jerusalem. His arrival animated the zealots; and the robbers and assassins who had come into the city from every quarter enacted scenes which are only paralleled by the September massacres of Paris in 1792." Ananus set himself against this sacrilegious reign of terror, but the zealots prevailed, and he was put to death, and his naked corpse "thrown out to the dogs and vultures, in a land where it was a sacred custom to bury even the worst malefactors before sunset. The moderate party was crushed, and the zealots followed up their triumph, first by a series of massacres, in which, says Josephus, 'they slaughtered the people like a herd of unclean animals,' to the number of 12,000, and then by murders under the form of law." Faction then ran riot as the doomed city awaited the coming of Titus, who succeeded his father Vespasian, for its final destruction.

42—page 347. When Vespasian was made Emperor, he departed for Rome, leaving Titus to work the wrath of God upon the doomed city—doomed because of unfaithfulness to its covenant with Jehovah. Early in the year 70, Titus, having collected his forces at Cæsarea, moved upon Jerusalem with not less than 80,000 men, arriving before the city when, at the last Passover ever celebrated, it was crammed, as Josephus relates, with a million persons keeping that feast and without any provision having been made for their sustenance. The garrison of the Holy City was made up of three principal factions, as ready to fight with one another as with the Roman. Eleazar, the leader of one faction of the zealots, with 2,400 men, held the Temple and four strong towers that had been erected at its corners. John of Giscala, leader of a mediating party, had succeeded to the position of Ananus in the Temple courts and the lower city, and with 6,000 men besieged Eleazar's forces. Simon, son of Gioras, occupied the hill of Zion with 10,000 Jews and 5,000 Idumeans, and confronted both the other leaders. Titus found these factions carrying on an incessant fight with one another by means of the war-engines left behind by Cestius in his flight. With such a state of things existing, there could be little hope of defense against the conquerors of the world.

43—page 353. The Prince arrived after Titus had pushed the siege far on toward completion. The historian records that on the first day of the feast, the Jewish leaders for a moment suspended their mutual hostilities to make a combined attack upon the single legion stationed on the Mount of Olives. The Romans, at work on their entrenchments, were suddenly beset by hosts that kept pouring out of the city, and were driven back to the summit of the hill; but by a desperate effort they at last succeeded in beating them back. On the next day, the second of the feast, the factions renewed the internal conflict, and the party of John gained possession of the Temple; and thus the factions were reduced to two.

44—page 356. The Christian inhabitants of Jerusalem alone formed an exception to the judicial blindness that had fallen upon Israel. Warned by the prophecy of Jesus

(Luke xxi. 20, 21), they had departed in a body, before the city was surrounded, to Pella, a village of Decapolis, beyond the Jordan.

45—page 360. When the siege at length shut in the city, it was no longer possible to furnish the priests or the offerings for the daily sacrifice twice a day for the sins of the people; hence when it ceased, on the 17th of the month Tamuz, the universal horror of a people undone expressing itself in a universal outcry. Concerning the cessation of the daily sacrifice, Whiston, the translator and editor of Josephus, has the following note: "This was a remarkable day indeed, the 17th of Panemus (Tamuz), A.D. 70, when, according to Daniel's prediction, six hundred and six years before, the Romans, in half a week, caused the sacrifice and oblation to cease (Dan. ix. 27). For from the month of February A.D. 66, about which time Vespasian entered on this war, to this very time, was just three years and a half."

46—page 367. The historical record is that, on April 13 A.D. 70, when Titus advanced in person at the head of six hundred cavalry to reconnoiter the city, not a man was to be seen; but as he rode incautiously near the wall, he was suddenly surrounded by a multitude that poured out from a gate behind him. Bareheaded and without a breastplate, he forced his way through the hosts with his horse and sword, amid a storm of darts that transfixed many of his followers, and, tho he escaped unharmed to the camp, the Jews could boast that the first act of the siege was Cæsar's flight.

47—page 378. What with faction within and assault from without, the wretchedness of Jerusalem at this time had become almost inconceivable. The historian graphically says:

"Soon there was literally a battle for life within the city. The weak and the starving had their last morsels of food snatched from them by the strong; and the strong were tortured and executed because their looks convicted them of having a concealed store. 'Every kind feeling, love, respect, natural affection, was extinct through the all-absorbing want. Wives would snatch the last morsel from husbands, children from parents, mothers from children; they would intercept even their own milk from the lips of their pining babes.' If we are allowed to doubt whether Josephus has exaggerated these horrors, we may be sure that his picture of the cruelties of his imperial patron is but too true. As the famine became more intolerable, so did the measures of Titus to force the people to surrender. Wretches who prowled outside the walls during the night, to pick up scraps of food, were scourged and crucified, sometimes to the number of five hundred at a time, and twisted into ludicrous postures by the wantonness of the soldiers; the soldiers bade those that desired peace to behold these examples of Roman mercy."

48—page 387. It is to the honor of Titus that he made earnest and repeated efforts to save the Temple as well as to prevent its desecration by the Jews themselves. After the destruction of Antonia and before his final assault upon the defenses of the Temple, he made a last experiment of clemency. According to the historian, many accepted his offer of mercy; and when the rest had fled to Zion and the Temple, he sent to Josephus to offer them free egress if they would come out and fight, rather than see the sanctuary polluted. His words, uttered in their own language, were beginning to make some impression, when his old enemy, John, sternly interrupted him, declaring that he feared not the taking of the city, for God would protect His own: and Josephus narrowly escaped capture. The captives just admitted to quarter, including many of the chief priests, next appeared before the Temple gate to entreat the zealots to save the house of God from ruin; but the merciless John, who had already butchered many of their relatives, answered with a shower of missiles, which—says Josephus—strewed the ground with bodies as thickly as the places where the slaves were thrown out unburied. Titus himself pleaded the inconsistency of filling with arms and blood the courts of the Holy Place, nay, even the Holy of Holies, which they had always guarded with jealousy. "I call on your gods," said he, "I call on my whole army—I call on the Jews who are with me—I call on yourselves—to witness that I do not force you to this crime. Come forth, and fight in any other place, and no Roman shall violate your sacred edifice." But the zealots, in their judicial blindness, rejected all offers of mercy, and waited for God to save the Temple by miracle.

49—page 409. The historian records that the year preceding the final revolt (A.D. 65) was marked by the direst prodigies of impending war and of the desolation of the Tem-

ple. During a whole year, a comet shaped like a simitar hung over the city, and many an eye-witness testified to the appearance described by Milton:

> "As when, to warn proud cities, war appears
> Waged in the troubled sky, and armies rush
> To battle in the clouds; before each van
> Prick forth the airy knights, and couch their spears,
> Till thickest legions close; with feats of arms
> From either end of heaven the welkin burns."

Those who witnessed the splendid comet of Donati (A.D. 1858) will at once be able to recognize the form of the flaming sword across the sky.

"The brazen gate of the Temple, which required twenty men to move it on its hinges, flew open of its own accord in the dead of night, as if to let in the advancing armies of the heathen." (See Philip Smith.)

50—page 419. The doom of the Holy City had been rendered inevitable by the conduct of the people in forsaking their covenant with Jehovah. The Evangelist Luke (xix. 41–44) represents Jesus as pausing as He approached the city, and shedding bitter tears over the remediless ness of the fate of the city and people. The passage is of interest on account, not only of this weeping, but also of the prophecy so remarkably fulfilled by Titus. The words of the Gospel are as follows:

"And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."

51—page 428.—It will be remembered that when Titus gathered his forces at Cæsarea for an advance upon Jerusalem, he drew from Alexandria, Egyptian and Ethiopian troops.

52—page 446. The loss of life among the Jews during the siege of Jerusalem was almost incredible. Josephus reckoned it at 1,100,000, a number not difficult to credit if we remember that "nearly the whole male population of Judea had been gathered together for the Passover when the city was beleaguered. The prisoners taken in the whole war were 90,000." Had it not been for the Jews of the dispersion, the nation would have perished with the city. It was due to the compassion of Titus that a movement that might have destroyed even this remnant was stopped almost at its inception. When persecution of the Jews began at Antioch, where several Jews were put to death for an alleged plot to set fire to the city, from which it would probably have spread over the empire, Titus put an end to it by his famous order and rebuke: "The country of the Jews is destroyed, thither they can not return; it would be hard to allow them no home to retreat to; leave them in peace."

53—page 459. By his Roman prenomen, Titus, is usually known Titus Flavius Sabinus Vespasianus, the eleventh of the twelve Cæsars, Emperor from 79 to 81 A.D. He was in some respects one of the most remarkable of the Cæsars. "Educated in the imperial court, he was thoroughly trained in all elegant accomplishments: he could speak Greek fluently, and could compose verses; he was proficient in music; he could write shorthand, and could imitate handwriting so skilfully that he used to say that he might have been a most successful forger. He was very handsome, with a fine commanding expression and a vigorous frame, well trained in all the exercises of a soldier." His long and varied military and executive experience, under the guidance of his father Vespasian and especially in the Jewish war, made him a consummate warrior and administrator. For a time, however, after he became formally associated with his father in the government, with the title of Cæsar, and practically controlled the administration during the last nine years of Vespasian's reign, he developed "the character of being luxurious, self-indulgent, profligate, and cruel," and seemed to have in himself the promise of being a second Nero. The scandal connecting his name with the shameless beauty

Berenice, the sister of the Agrippa of the Acts of the Apostles, outraged public opinion at Rome, but ended in his sending her back to the East.

The death of Vespasian, in 79 A.D., wrought a transformation in Titus, and he became known as the "love and delight of mankind." "He had the tact to make himself liked by all. He seems to have been thoroughly kindly and good-natured; he delighted in giving splendid presents, and his memorable saying, 'I have lost a day,' is said to have been uttered one evening at the dinner-table when he suddenly remembered that he had not bestowed a gift on any one that day."

54—page 467. The fine portrait here drawn of Titus Flavius Vespasianus, the tenth of the Twelve Cæsars, known in history as Vespasian, is in striking contrast with that previously sketched of his son Titus. The father had little of the princely and imposing personality of the son. He was a thoroughly able soldier, while simple and frugal in his habits; in short, Tacitus says that "but for his avarice he was equal to the generals of old days." A better judgment, however, would probably attribute the avarice, with which both Tacitus and Suetonius stigmatize him, to "an enlightened economy, which, in the disordered state of the Roman finances, was an absolute necessity." He could be abundantly "liberal to impoverished senators and knights, to cities and towns desolated by natural calamity, and especially to men of letters and of the professor class, several of whom he pensioned with salaries of as much as £800 a year." He was a blunt, plain soldier, without distinguished bearing, and perhaps for that very reason a greater favorite with the army and the common people. "By his own example of simplicity of life he put to shame the luxury and extravagance of the Roman nobles, and initiated in many respects a marked improvement in the general tone of society," while devoting much thought to the spread and promotion of those intellectual tastes with which he was not personally in sympathy.

55—page 523. The tragic fate of Sabat is a matter of history, tho the story of the dead bride is a legendary attachment. Josephus tells us that he "was one Jesus, the son of Ananus, a plebeian and a husbandman, who four years before the war began, and at a time when the city was in very great peace and prosperity, came to that feast whereon it is our custom for every one to make tabernacles to God in the Temple, and began on a sudden to cry aloud: 'A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the holy house, a voice against the bridegroom and the bride, and a voice against this whole people.' This was his cry as he went about by day and by night, in all the lanes of the city." The efforts of the people and even of the Roman procurator to suppress his cry were unavailing; and when the scourge was applied, at every stroke of the whip his answer was: "Wo, wo to Jerusalem!" "This cry was the loudest at the festivals; and he continued this ditty for seven years and five months, without growing hoarse or being tired therewith, until the very time that he saw his presage in earnest fulfilled in our siege, when it ceased; for as he was going round on the wall, he cried out with his utmost force, 'Wo, wo to the city again, and to the people, and to the holy house!' And just as he added at the last, 'Wo, wo to myself also!' there came a stone out of one of the engines, and smote him, and killed him immediately; and, as he was uttering the very same presage, he gave up the ghost."

56—page 531. Josephus gives a somewhat detailed account of the final struggle and of the burning of the Temple. After sharp conflict and setting fire to the doors and outer courts of the Temple, Titus retired into the tower of Antonia, and "resolved to storm the Temple the next day, early in the morning, with his whole army, and to encamp round about the holy house." The Jews, however, after a little, attacked the Romans, who drove back those that were quenching the fire in the inner court of the Temple, and those that guarded the holy house, and pursued them as far as the Holy Place itself. The record is that at this time, on the tenth day of the month Ab, the day on which it was formerly burned by the king of Babylon, "one of the soldiers, without staying for any orders, and without any concern or dread upon him at so great an undertaking, and being hurried on by a certain divine fury, snatched somewhat out of the materials that were on fire, and being lifted up by another soldier, he set fire to a golden window or lattice, through which there was a passage to the rooms that were round

about the holy house, on the north side of it. As the flames went upward, the Jews made a great clamor, such as so mighty an affliction required, and ran together to prevent it; and now they spared not their lives any longer, nor suffered anything to restrain their force, since that holy house was perishing, for whose sake it was that kept guard about it."

The utmost efforts of Titus to save the sacred building were utterly vain. "The legionaries either could not or would not hear; they rushed on, trampling each other down in their furious haste, or, stumbling over the crumbling ruins, perished with the enemy. Each exhorted the other, and each hurled his blazing brand into the inner part of the edifice, and then hurried to the work of carnage. The unarmed and defenseless people were slain in thousands; they lay heaped, like sacrifices, round the altar; the steps of the Temple ran with streams of blood, which washed down the bodies which lay upon it."

JESUS OF NAZARETH FROM THE PRESENT JEWISH POINT OF VIEW

In this age and land, Jew and Christian seem destined at last to give one another the glad hand. The old spirit of misunderstanding and often of hate (which to our shame—more to the shame of the Christian than of the Jew—has now lasted nearly a score of centuries), in this light of noon, now and here, is intolerable. At the dawn of the twentieth century, antisemitism in America, even the feeblest whisper of it, is an anachorism, and an anachronism of the grossest sort.

That spirit was natural enough with the church of the early ages, for the church, nearly all of it, was simply the pagan tiger baptized, and labels changed, but not the nature of the beast. The Christ that was presented to the Jew the Jew did well to hate, for he was a Christ of barbaric cruelty, a monster who drove millions of Jews through fire and starvation, out of the world, and this entire people for ages from their homes and countries. If the Jews had not hated and spit on the very name of that Christ, they had been more or less than human.

Among this people the ties of kinship are especially strong, so that when a wrong is done to one, no other flame is needed to make the blood of all boil. With the million of fires burning to death their martyred brethren, quite naturally the air grew too thick with smoke, and their eyes too sore with weeping, for them to see any of the beauty of the Cross. Talk of the sweetness of that Christ was hideous mockery to them. I too would join with them and spit on such a Christ. But now the smoke is getting out of the air, and the Jew, like the rest of us, is beginning to see the real Jesus of the Gospels, and he also, like the rest of us when we see Him aright, can not but respect, admire, love Him—claim Him as one of his own people, saying, with Rabbi Henry Berkowitz, of Philadelphia, this Jew, Jesus, "is the greatest, noblest rabbi of them all," and as the famous Jewish writer, Max Nordau, touchingly says, "He is one of us."

Yes, we are living in a better land and in a better time. Here both Christian and Jew clasp the folds of the same flag and say, Our Country, and both look up to the one God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and say, Our Father; and may not both, by and by, look to this Jew, Jesus of Nazareth, and say, Our Brother?

Within the past two years I have written to a number of representative Jews, residing in different parts of the world, asking the question, *WHAT IS THE JEWISH THOUGHT TODAY OF JESUS OF NAZARETH?* The inquiry was accompanied with a copy of the letter from Dr. Kohler, which is here published as the first of the series. There are utterances in some of these published replies that may strike strangely and discordantly on orthodox Christian hearts. It will be well for all such to ponder the following letter, here given as prefatory to the other replies. It is from the pen of Dr. Singer, a well-known Jewish scholar, the originator and now the managing editor of the Jewish Encyclopedia:

A LETTER FROM ISIDORE SINGER, Ph.D.

"It has been both a privilege and a pleasure to me to examine in the original manuscript the letters which are printed on the following pages. They are all from representative Jewish scholars, theologians, historians, and philosophers, well and most favorably known in the scientific world of Europe and America. Where it has been necessary to abbreviate for lack of space, I find that the work has been done in a way that does no injustice to the writer. No one is made to say, by faulty translation, or abridgment, or otherwise, what he does not intend to say. It is my hope and most ardent desire that these utterances may greatly help to make known to the Christian world the real heart and mind of my brethren. I am glad to be permitted to add a thought or two of my own.

"I regard Jesus of Nazareth as a Jew of the Jews, one whom all Jewish people are learning to love. His teaching has been an immense service to the world in bringing Israel's God to the knowledge of hundreds of millions of mankind.

"The great change in Jewish thought concerning Jesus of Nazareth, I can not better illustrate than by this fact:

"When I was a boy, had my father, who was a very pious man, heard the name of Jesus uttered from the pulpit of our synagog,

he and every other man in the congregation would have left the building, and the rabbi would have been dismissed at once.

"Now, it is not strange, in many synagogs, to hear sermons preached eulogistic of this Jesus, and nobody thinks of protesting,—in fact, we are all glad to claim Jesus as one of our people.

"ISIDORE SINGER."

New York, March 25, 1901.

LETTERS FROM REPRESENTATIVE JEWS

[Omissions from letters indicated by ellipses have been made necessary because of lack of space. In another form, at no distant date, it is the expectation that these and similar letters will be published in full. No letter from a Jew who is known to be a Christian convert is here given; hence those portions of letters that discuss the divinity of Christ have generally been omitted.]

From KAUFMANN KOHLER, Ph.D., Rabbi of Temple Beth-El, New York:

The true history of Jesus is so wrapped up in myth, the story of his life told in the gospels so replete with contradictions, that it is rather difficult for the unbiased reader to arrive at the true historical facts. Still the beautiful tales about the things that happened around the lake of Galilee show that there was a spiritual daybreak in that dark corner of Judea of which official Judaism had failed to take sufficient cognizance. "The stone that the builders rejected has become the corner-stone" of a new world.

It is assumed by entire Christendom that the Jews in rejecting Jesus Christ brought upon themselves everlasting doom, the inexorable fate of exile, persecution, and hatred. This view is based upon the crucifixion story in the gospel records, which, while shielding the Romans, maligns the Jews, and is incompatible with the simple facts of the Jewish law, the older Christian tradition, with common sense, and with the established character of Pontius Pilate, a very tiger in human shape. Surely the records of the trial demand a revision.

"DID THE JEWS REJECT CHRIST?" Most assuredly the weird and visionary figure of the dead and rerisen Christ, the crucified Messiah lifted up to the clouds there to become a partaker of God's nature—a metaphysical or mythological principle of the cosmos—the Jews did reject. They would not, let it cost what it may, surrender the doctrine of the unity and spirituality of God. Jesus, the living man, the teacher and practiser of the tenderest love for God and man, the paragon of piety, humility, and self-surrender, whose very failings were born of overflowing goodness and sympathy with the afflicted, the Jews had no

cause to reject. He was one of the best and truest sons of the synagog. Did he not say, "I have not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it"? What reason had the Jews for hating and persecuting him who had nothing of the rigidity of the schoolman, none of the pride of the philosopher and recluse, nor even the implacable zeal of the ancient prophet to excite the popular wrath; who came only to weep with the sorrowing, to lift up the downtrodden, to save and to heal? He was a man of the people; why should the people have raised the cry, "Crucify him!" against him whose only object in life was to bring home the message of God's love to the humblest of His children? Nor, in fact, was he the only one among the popular preachers of the time who in unsparing language and scathing satire exposed and castigated the abuses of the ruling priesthood, the worldly Sadducees, as well as the hypocrisy and false piety of some of the Pharisean doctors of the law. His whole manner of teaching, the so-called Lord's Prayer, the Golden Rule, the code of ethics expounded for the elect ones in the Sermon on the Mount, no less than his miraculous cures, show him to have been one of the Essenes, a popular saint.

But he was more than an ordinary teacher and healer of men. He went to the very core of religion and laid bare the depths of the human soul. As a veritable prophet, Jesus, in such striking manner, disclaimed allegiance to any of the Pharisean schools and asked for no authority but that of the living voice within, while passing judgment on the law, in order to raise life to a higher standard. He was a bold religious and social reformer, eager to regenerate Judaism. True, a large number of sayings were attributed to the dead master by his disciples which had been current in the schools. Still, the charm of true originality is felt in these utterances of his when the great realities of life, when the idea of Sabbath, the principle of purity, the value of a human soul, of woman, even of the abject sinner, are touched upon. None can read these parables and verdicts of the Nazarene and not be thrilled with the joy of a truth unspelled before. There is wonderful music in the voice which stays an angry crowd, saying, "Let him that is without sin cast the first stone!" that speaks the words, "Be like children, and you are not far from the kingdom of God!"

"Did the Jews Reject Christ?" Jesus anticipated a reign of perfect love, but centuries of hatred came. Could the Jews, victims of Christian intolerance, look with calmness and admiration upon Jesus, in whose name all the atrocities were perpetrated? Still, the leading thinkers of Judaism willingly recognized that the founder of the Christian Church, as well as that of Islamism, was sent by divine Providence to prepare the pagan world for the Messianic kingdom of truth and righteousness.

The Jew of to-day beholds in Jesus an inspiring ideal of matchless beauty. While he lacks the element of stern justice expressed so forcibly in the law and in the Old-Testament characters, the firmness of self-assertion so necessary to the full development of manhood, all those

social qualities which build up the home and society, industry and worldly progress, he is the unique exponent of the principle of redeeming love. His name as helper of the poor, as sympathizing friend of the fallen, as brother of every fellow sufferer, as lover of man and redeemer of woman, has become the inspiration, the symbol, and the watchword for the world's greatest achievements in the field of benevolence. While continuing the work of the synagog, the Christian Church with the larger means at her disposal created those institutions of charity and redeeming love that accomplished wondrous things. The very sign of the cross has lent a new meaning, a holier pathos to suffering, sickness, and sin, so as to offer new practical solutions for the great problems of evil which fill the human heart with new joys of self-sacrificing love.

All this modern Judaism gladly acknowledges, reclaiming Jesus as one of its greatest sons. But it denies that one single man, or one church, however broad, holds the key to many-sided truth. It waits for the time when all life's deepest mysteries will have been spelled, and to the ideals of sage and saint that of the seeker of all that is good, beautiful, and true will have been joined; when Jew and Gentile, synagog and church, will merge into the Church universal, into the great city of humanity whose name is "God is there."

August 23, 1899.

From MORITZ FRIEDLÄNDER, Ph.D., author of "Patristische und Talmudische Studien," "Das Judenthum in der vorchristlichen griechischen Welt," etc., Vienna, Austria:

. . . The synagog of primitive Christianity was the direct offspring of the Jewish synagog. Here, too, the center of sublime, divine service which powerfully influenced the simple and pious souls, was Moses and the prophets, hallowed, in addition, by the splendor of the invisibly ruling Messiah.

In this synagog originated a new Israel, which silently and noiselessly prospered beside "the burden of the law," which killed the spirit of the Mosaic doctrine and prepared the ossification and dwarfing of Judaism.

This synagog was a true house of God, which made all those who entered it enthusiastic for a pure Mosaism, whose principal doctrine was the love of God and the love of man. Here every one, through teaching and learning, invigorated himself, and even the most simple-minded visitor left the house as an enthusiastic apostle. In short, it was a synagog to which, if it existed to-day, all hearts would be drawn and around which the entire enlightened Judaism of to-day would gather. And Jesus himself, who was the starting-point of the synagog of the Messianic community, who fertilized and rejuvenated it by the sublime Messianic idea, was proclaimed as divine Redeemer because of this rejuvenation, as well as because of the redemption undertaken

by him, on the Palestinian soil, from the "unsupportable burdens" which the Pharisee teachers imposed on the people (Matt. xxiii. 4).

Always higher, on to unapproachableness grew his personality, including all that is beautiful, lofty, sublime, and divine, and forcing every one to adoration and self-nobilization. This divine "Son of Man" became the world-ideal, and this sublime ideal has been originated in Judaism, which will ever be remembered as having been predestined by Providence to bring forth such a creation.

November 6, 1899.

From MORRIS JASTROW, Jr., Ph.D., Professor of Semitic Languages, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa.:

From the historic point of view, Jesus is to be regarded as a direct successor of the Hebrew prophets. His teachings are synonymous with the highest spiritual aspirations of the human race. Like the prophets, he lays the chief stress upon pure conduct and moral ideas, but he goes beyond the prophets in his absolute indifference to theological speculations and religious rites. It is commonly said that the Jews rejected Jesus. They did so in the sense in which they rejected the teachings of their earlier prophets, but the question may be pertinently asked, Has Christianity accepted Jesus? Neither our social nor our political system rests upon the principles of love and charity, so prominently put forward by Jesus.

The long hoped-for reconciliation between Judaism and Christianity will come when once the teachings of Jesus shall have become the axioms of human conduct.

November 6, 1899.

From BARON DAVID VON GÜNZBURG, St. Petersburg, Russia:

Jesus of Nazareth sought to regenerate the common people of Galilee by infusing into them the moral teaching of the academies; and to this end he stripped the religious ideal of its scientific garb. Understood perfectly by those who listened to him, his simple language, nevertheless, proved a stumbling-block for those who had not known him, but who desired, after his death, to commune with his apostles. They construed current phrases as predicating actual entities, and having thus created a certain type of Messiah, it therefore devolved upon succeeding ages, under the influence of controversy and in the ardor of religious polemics, to harmonize at once all the genuine traditions, all the ill-understood and ill-reported addresses made by him, all his noble aspirations which later generations failed to comprehend, and to bring them all into accord with the ardent faith of new converts as well as with the Bible texts relative to the Messiah.

September 29, 1899.

From PROF. DAVID CASTELLI, author of "Storia degli Israeliti," Florence, Italy:

. . . Jesus in a certain sense fulfilled in his person the prophecies of the Old Testament; they reached in him a height beyond which it is impossible to go. He was not the magnificent worldly king, since there could be no question of a worldly king in Israel again, for whom the Hebrews waited in vain; but he was the great teacher of mankind, spreading among all nations that principle of love and humanity which, until then, had remained confined within the limits of Judaism. His word, and after him that of the Apostles, who, like himself, were born and reared in Judaism, were a powerful means of carrying into effect the yet unfulfilled prophecy of the Old Testament: "The Lord will be King of all the earth; in that day God will be one and his name one."

September 28, 1899.

From MARCUS JASTROW, Ph.D., Rabbi Emeritus of Rodeph-Shalom Congregation, Philadelphia, Pa., Author of the "Dictionary of the Talmud," etc.:

The thoughtful Jews of all days, and especially of modern tendency of thought, see in Jesus, as depicted in the New Testament, the exponent of a part of the ethics of Judaism, and more especially of its milder side—love and charity. The ethical sayings of Jesus reflect the conception of Judaism in his own period, as it was current among its spiritual leaders, such as Hillel, Rabbi Akiba, Ben Zoma, and others. To a heathen world merged in vice and crime, to a civilization that led the thoughtful among Romans and Greeks toward the abyss of pessimism and despair, Christianity offered the bright prospect of forgiveness and reconciliation with goodness. For the Jews it had no mission, no new gifts to offer. Its ethics appear to the modern Jew one-sided and exaggerated; the sense of justice appears to be pushed into the background in favor of an unrealizable ideal of love.

Judaism prohibits revenge and the bearing of grudge, commands the assistance of an enemy in distress, but "to love one's enemy" appears to the modern Jew a somewhat morbid philanthropy that could never have been seriously meant. To bear indignities with patience, "to be of the insulted and not of the insulters," is a Jewish principle, but to offer the right cheek to him who slaps you on the left, to offer the undergarment to him who takes away your cloak—no, we will not and we can not do it. Hence it is that we Jews, of our modern days, speak of Jesus with that respect which all high-minded dreamers of all ages and nations inspire, even though we can not accept all their ideas and ideals, and are mindful of the fact that it is to noble dreamers that humanity is indebted for its most precious possessions.

September 4, 1899.

From ÉMILE LÉVY, Chief Rabbi, Bayonne, France:

Wide as the difference may be in certain essential points between Christianity and Judaism, yet the former approaches the latter through its origin, and a common basis which is love of God and man. In proclaiming the superiority of spirit over matter, and the principle of immortality of the soul and of a future life; in exhorting mankind in a touching and poetical language, ever trying to come nearer the divine example by a charitable, humble, modest, and pure life, Christ has rendered immense services to humanity and to the cause of progress and civilization, for he thus spread the Jewish doctrine, which aims at a continual improvement of the individual and of society, and contributes to the preparation of the Messianic era and of the brotherhood of the nations.

October 24, 1899.

From HENRY BERKOWITZ, D.D., Rabbi of Rodeph Shalom Congregation, Founder and Chancellor of the Jewish Chautauqua Society, Philadelphia, Pa.:

. . . To me one of the saddest and most tragic facts in history is this, that Jesus, the gentlest and noblest rabbi of them all, should have become lost to his own people by reason of the conduct of those who called themselves his followers. In Jesus there is the very flowering of Judaism. What pathos, then, in the fact that his own people have been made to shun his very name; that even to-day they speak it with bated breath, because it has been made to them a symbol and a synonym of all that is unjewish, unchristian—irreligious. . . .

November 1, 1899.

From JOSEPH REINACH, Paris, France, formerly Member of the Chamber of Deputies, and editor-in-chief of *La République Française*; Secretary to Gambetta, and editor of Gambetta's works:

. . . The characteristic mark of Jesus's moral is love, the purest and noblest love that ever existed—love for all human creatures, love for the poor, love for the wicked. Love is joy, and love is duty, and love is life. Humanity, since its first day and to its last day, was and will be thirsty for love, and Jesus is and will remain one of the highest, if not the highest, type of humanity, because his words, and his legend, and his poetry are and will be an eternal source of love.

November 28, 1899.

From CESARE LOMBROSO, Professor of Psychiatry and Criminology, University of Turin, Italy:

In my eyes Jesus is one of the greatest geniuses the world has produced, but he was, like all geniuses, somewhat unbalanced, anticipating

by ten centuries the emancipation of the slave, and by twenty centuries socialism and the emancipation of woman. He did not proceed by a precise, systematic demonstration, but through short sentences and by leaps and bounds, so that without the downfall of the Temple, and without the persecutions of the Christians under Nero, his work would have been lost. . . .

September 29, 1899.

From MAX NORDAU, M.D., critic and philosopher, Paris, France:

. . . Jesus is soul of our soul, as he is flesh of our flesh. Who, then, could think of excluding him from the people of Israel? St. Peter will remain the only Jew who said of the son of David, "I know not the man." If the Jews up to the present time have not publicly rendered homage to the sublime moral beauty of the figure of Jesus, it is because their tormentors have always persecuted, tortured, assassinated them in his name. The Jews have drawn their conclusions from the disciples as to the master, which was a wrong, a wrong pardonable in the eternal victims of the implacable, cruel hatred of those who called themselves Christians. Every time that a Jew mounted to the sources and contemplated Christ alone, without his pretended faithful, he cried, with tenderness and admiration: "Putting aside the Messianic mission, this man is ours. He honors our race and we claim him as we claim the Gospels—flowers of Jewish literature and only Jewish. . . ."

From ISIDORE HARRIS, M.A., Rabbi of West London Synagog of British Jews, London, England:

It seems to me that the truest view of Jesus is that which regards him as a Jewish reformer of a singularly bold type. In his days, Judaism had come to be overlaid with formalism. The mass of rabbinical laws that in the course of centuries had grown round the Torah of Israel threatened to crush out its spirit. Jesus protested against this tendency with all the energy of an enthusiast. Ceremonial can never be anything more than a means to an end—that end being the realization of the higher life of communion with God. The rabbinical doctors of the law were inclined to treat it as an end in itself, and this Jesus saw was a mistake. In taking up this position, he was simply following in the path that had already been marked out centuries before by the Hebrew prophets.

October 17, 1899.

From JECHESKIEL CARO, Ph.D., Chief Rabbi, Lemberg, Austria:

Primitive Christianity, as Jesus of Nazareth taught and preached it, is not at all different from the ethical principles of Judaism. He him-

self proclaimed that he did not come to destroy the law. In morality and the love of God and man (Deut. vi. 5; Matt. xxii. 37; Lev. xvii. 18; Matt. xxii. 39) are contained the real essence and the categorical imperative of religion. . . .

October 18, 1899.

From N. PORGES, Ph.D., Rabbi, Leipsic, Germany:

Even the most conscientious Jew may, without hesitation, recognize that in view of the immense effect and success of his life, Jesus has become a figure of the highest order in the history of religion, and that the noble man, the pure character, the mild heart-winning personality, come forth unmistakable even from the mythical cover which surrounds his person. The fact that Jesus was a Jew should, I think, in our eyes, rather help than hinder the acknowledgment of his high significance, and it is completely incomprehensible to me why a Jew should think and speak about Jesus otherwise than with the highest respect, although we, as Jews, repudiate the belief in his Messianic character and his divine humanity with the utmost energy, from innate conviction.

September 28, 1899.

From the late JAMES H. HOFFMAN, Founder and first President of the Hebrew Technical Institute, New York City:

. . . I revere him (Jesus) for having brought home by his own life and his teachings, to the innermost hearts and souls of mankind, of all times, in every station, the eternal truths as first embodied in the Mosaic code and proclaimed in undying words by the prophets. I recognize in him the blending of the divine and human, the lofty and lowly, showing the path for the dual nature of man, by divine aspirations to gain the victory over the earthly life, tending to draw him downward—the Son of God triumphing over the child of the earth. . . .

October 6, 1899.

From ADOLF BRUELL, Ph.D., Editor "*Populär-Wissenchaftliche Monatsblätter*," Frankfort-on-the-Main, Germany:

. . . In Christianity, as it is represented in the Gospels, the sublime doctrines of Judaism, if we subtract the dogmas, find their most beautiful expression. If we deduct the purely human additions, as well in Judaism where they take the form of observances, as in Christianity, where they crystallize themselves into dogmas, we find that there is no real antagonism between the two. And how could it be otherwise, for did not Jesus stand upon the ground of biblical and prophetical Judaism?

. . . . . .

The fact that love, the highest religious principle, has not yet fully pen-

etrated Christianity, as is shown by the awful fanaticism of the Middle Ages and the odious anti-Jewish movement of our own time, does not alter the fact that Jesus promulgated a sublime doctrine which is in full harmony with Judaism, and with which Christianity must be entirely imbued before it can be seriously called the religion of Christ. . . . .

Judaism and Christianity both have still to go through a process of purification as to law and dogma, and only after these separating walls have fallen, will Jews and Christians, and with them all humanity, on the terrain of pure morality and the spirit of the prophets, tender one another forever the hand of brotherhood in the noble spirit of reconciliation.

Meanwhile, it would be appropriate that honest and enthusiastic men might form an alliance in order to reconcile Judaism and Christianity, and for this purpose Jesus and the prophets would be rather genial helpers than detractors.

October 10, 1899.

From THÉODORE REINACH, Ph.D., former President of the Société des Etudes Juives, Paris, France:

Although we know very little with certainty concerning the life and teachings of Christ, we know enough of him to believe that, in morals as well as in theology, he was the heir and continuator of the old prophets of Israel. There is no necessary gap between Isaiah and Jesus, but it is the misfortune of both Christianity and Judaism that a gap *has* been effected by the infiltration of heathen ideas in the one, and the stubborn (only too explainable) reluctance of the other, to admit among its prophets one of its greatest sons. I consider it the duty of both enlightened Christians and Jews to endeavor to bridge over this gap.

December 17, 1899.

From JACOB H. SCHIFF, New York City:

We Jews honor and revere Jesus of Nazareth as we do our own prophets who preceded him. By his martyrdom, his teachings have been emphasized, and these are to this day I believe often better practised by the descendants of the race he sprang from than by those who have become the followers of Christ in name, but not in spirit, else the prejudice practised by the latter against Jews would not exist. . . .

September 5, 1899.

From M. LAZARUS, Ph.D., late Professor of Philosophy, University of Berlin, author of "Die Ethik des Judenthums," Meran, Austria:

. . . I am of the opinion that we should endeavor with all possible zeal to obtain an exact understanding of the great personality of Jesus and to reclaim him for Judaism.

January 24, 1901.

The following questions were sent to a number of Jewish scholars, whose answers are tabulated below:

QUESTION 1. Do you agree with Dr. Kohler that there was a spiritual daybreak on the shores of Galilee nineteen centuries ago, which was not sufficiently recognized by the official Sanhedrin at that time?

Q. 2. Do you esteem Jesus to have been one "sent of God" to reveal the Father more clearly to men?

Q. 3. Do you believe that his mission has been of advantage in making known to the Gentile world the God of Abraham?

Q. 4. Do you consider him to have been a Jewish prophet? If so, would you indicate in what order he would stand, in your judgment, respecting the earlier prophets?

Q. 5. Is there a growing interest among Jews in the study of the sayings and life of Jesus?

Q. 6. Is there a growing willingness in Judaism, as says Dr. Kohler, to reclaim Jesus as one of her greatest sons?

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.

Name.	Question 1.	Question 2.	Question 3.	Question 4.	Question 5.	Question 6.
I. Zangwill, English novelist and critic. London, Eng.	Not a daybreak, but a burst of sunshine.	.....	.....	Yes.....	Only among the liberal thinkers.	Yes, among some of these thinkers, but not in one or two whose thinking is characteristically Jewish.
I. L. Leucht, Rabbi of Touro Synagog, New Orleans, La.	I do	I recognize in him one sent by God, like every man that uttereth a truth, is a messenger of God.	Christ intended to popularize monotheism among the heathens, and I believe that Christianity has been a great help.	I do not consider Jesus a Jewish prophet in the sense your question indicates.	Yes.....	Yes.
M. Gaster, Chief Rabbi of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews of England. London.	No.....	No	He has been of advantage in making known to the Gentile world the God of Abraham.	I do not consider him to have been a Jewish prophet.	No	No.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.—*Continued.*

Name.	Question 1.	Question 2.	Question 3.	Question 4.	Question 5.	Question 6.
G. J. Emanuel, Rabbi of Birmingham Synagog, Birmingham, England.	Yes.....	Yes.....	Yes	Yes, following Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, and Micah.	Yes.....	Yes.
Max Landsberg, Ph.D., Rabbi, Rochester, N. Y.	I do not	I do esteem him to have been "sent of God," in the same sense as hundreds of other Jewish teachers.	I agree with Maimonides, who holds that Christianity and Mohammedanism have aided in spreading the purer God ideas.	I do not consider him to have been a Jewish prophet, but a Jewish teacher and preacher.	There is a growing interest among all men in the study of comparative religion, in which the Jews participate.	The Jewish prejudice against the very name of Jesus has been caused by the long persecution of Jews carried on for his sake.
Moïse Schwab, Librarian at Bibliothèque Nationale, translator into French of the Talmud Yerushalmi, Paris, France.	Yes, but Jesus, professing doctrines contrary to the Sanhedrin, whose authority he recognized (Matt. xxiii. 2) was subject to the severity of the Mosaic law (Deut. xvii. 8-14).	In spite of the sympathy of the Jew for the personality of Jesus, he, worshiping God alone, refuses to see in Jesus a son of God, or His envoy in a supernatural sense.	Yes, without doubt; his religious mission has become the greatest blessing for the entire world.	Jesus may well be, as Jewish prophet, the equal even of Isaiah, and placed above those other Jewish prophets whose spiritual horizon is not so broad.	The enlightened Jews regard Jesus as an illustrious coreligionist and a disciple of the rabbis; and take consequently an interest in the study of his life and his influence on the world.	See answer to Question 5.

From SIMON WOLF, LL.D., former Consul of the United States to Egypt, Vice-President of Order B'ne B'rith, Washington, D. C.:

I have not had the time nor the desire to investigate the alleged divinity of the Christian Savior. I have, however, recognized the great influence his character and labors have exercised throughout the world. If properly understood and if properly construed, I have no doubt whatsoever that what he aimed at and labored for would prove of great benefit to every human being. I look upon him, in short, as a great teacher and reformer, one who aimed at the uplifting of suffering humanity, whose every motive was kindness, mercy, charity, and justice, and if his wise teaching and example have not always been followed, the blame should not be his, but rather those who have claimed to be his followers. I have the very highest regard for him as a man who reflects in his sayings the divine Spirit, which after all is nothing more or less than a reflex of the Jewish ethics in which he was so well grounded.

October 9, 1899.

From H. WEINSTOCK, Sacramento, Cal. Extract from a letter to Dr. K. Kohler:

[The letter urges reasons why the life and sayings of Jesus should be taught in Jewish Sabbath-schools. Dr. Kohler approves of the suggestion.]

With the growing enlightenment and the broadening atmosphere under which the modern Jew lives, the progressive Jew looks upon the Nazarene as one of Israel's great teachers, who has a potent influence on civilization, whose words and deeds have left an undying imprint upon the human mind, and have done heroic work toward universalizing the God of Israel and the Bible. This change of sentiment toward Jesus is largely due to the intelligent and progressive preaching of our modern rabbis, who seem to appreciate the glory Jesus has shed upon the Jewish name, and the splendid work he did in broadening the influence of the Jewish teachings. But, despite all this, the fact remains, that, so far as I know, not one Jewish Sabbath-school in the land teaches a single word concerning Jesus of Nazareth.

To maintain a continued silence in the Jewish Sabbath-school on Jesus would seem a grave error. . . .

The influence of "Jesus the Christ" may be diminishing in the rational world, but the influence of "Jesus the Man" is increasing daily the world over, and no Jewish education can be complete that does not embody within it a comprehensive knowledge of Jesus the Jew, his life, his teachings, and the causes which led to his death. . . .

It would seem to be in the highest interest of the modern Jew and Judaism that the curriculum of at least every reform Jewish Sabbath-school should, from a purely historical standpoint, embrace a simple yet comprehensible history of the life of Jesus, and its wonderful moral

and religious influence, in order that the rising Jews may be able to appreciate better the powerful influence Judaic teachings and the Bible have had upon civilization, and the exalted place given by the world to one of their teachers and brethren, who lived a purely Jewish life and taught only Jewish precepts. . . .

September 26, 1899.

From GUSTAV GOTTHEIL, Ph.D., Rabbi Emeritus of Temple Emanu-El, New York:

The keynote of prophetic religion of the Jewish prophets was holiness of life and purity of heart. Love and mercy shown by men, one to another, make up the acceptable worship of the Holy One of Israel. To place the Master of Nazareth by their side can surely be no dishonor to him, nor can it dim the luster of his name. If he has added to their spiritual bequests new jewels of religious truth, and spoken words which are words of life, because they touch the deepest springs of the human heart, why should we Jews not glory in him? Show us the man, help us to understand his mind, draw from his face the thick veil behind which his personality has been buried for the Jewish life by the heartless zeal of his so-called followers, and you will find the Jewish heart as responsive to truth and light and love as that of all other nations. The question whether Jesus suffered martyrdom solely for his new teachings or for other causes, we will not discuss. The crown of thorns on his head makes him only the more our brother. For to this day it is borne by his people. Were he alive to-day, who, think you, would be nearer his heart—the persecuted or the persecutors?

October 24, 1899.

From EMANUEL WEILL, Rabbi of the Portuguese Congregation, Paris, France:

I do not know the secret of God, but I believe that Jesus and Christianity were providential means, useful to the Deity in guiding all men gradually, and by an effort, keeping pace with the mental state of the majority of men from paganism up to the pure and true idea of the divinity.

The error—one might almost say a fatal one—of Christianity is to believe that it is an end in itself, whereas it is but a step, and as error often generates evil, Christianity in its evolution toward its end has effected side by side much good as well as much harm.

We Jews await the Christians on God's appointed day, when, all humanity having become more enlightened, will rally to the spiritualistic principle which is that of Judaism, viz.: that of the unity and the perfect spirituality of God, in opposition to any incarnation and to any trinitarian idea whatever.

Meanwhile, I think that Jews and Christians, divided on the identi-

fication of Jesus with God, but both in accord in acknowledging this God the same for all, consider themselves children of the same Father, and thus love one another with brotherly love.

October 11, 1899.

From M. KAYSERLING, Ph.D., Rabbi, Budapest, Hungary:

The Jews rejected Jesus as the Messiah and Redeemer, but they recognized him as "the extraordinary man" who first showed to the heathen world the way to natural religion and moral perfection. "The founder of Christianity," says the pious and scholarly Jacob Emden of Altona, who lived about the middle of the last century, "was a twofold benefactor to the world, since, on the one hand, he strengthened with all his might the doctrine of Moses and insisted upon its eternal validity; and, on the other hand, drew heathens away from idolatry and obligated them to observe the seven Noachian commandments to which he added moral teachings. The alliance of the nations in our time can be regarded as an alliance to the glory of God, whose aim is to proclaim over all the world that there is only one God who is Master in heaven and on earth; who rewards the good and punishes the evil."

This is the opinion of the immense majority of the Jews of our epoch about Jesus of Nazareth, "the extraordinary man." We all look forward to that sublime end when all human beings, prompted by the love of fellow men, shall recognize God and worship Him in full harmony and glory as the one only God.

November 20, 1899.

From DAVID PHILIPSON, D.D., Professor in Hebrew Union College, Rabbi of Mound Street Temple, Cincinnati, Ohio:

There is no backwardness nor hesitancy on the part of modern Jewish thought in acknowledging the greatness of the teacher of Nazareth, the sweetness of his character, the power of his genius. But, as a matter of course, we accord him no exceptional position as the flower of humanity, the special incarnation of the Divinity. Judaism holds that every man is the son of God. Jesus was a Jew of the Jews. The orthodox Christianity of to-day he would scarcely recognize, as its chief dogmas were unknown to him.

September 19, 1899.

From EMIL G. HIRSCH, Ph.D., LL.D., L.H.D., Rabbi of Sinai Congregation, Professor of Rabbinical Literature in Chicago University, Chicago, Ill.:

. . . For me Jesus is an historical reality. To understand his work and correctly to value his mission, one must bear in mind his own time. Galilean as he was, he must have grown up under influences making for an intense Jewish patriotism.

. . . Under close analysis, his precepts will be found to contain nothing that was new. There is scarce an expression credited to him but has its analogon in the well-known sayings of the rabbis. He did not pretend to found a new religion. The doctrines he developed were the familiar truths of Israel's prophetic monotheism. Nor did his ethical proclamation sound a note before unknown in the household of the synagogue or in the schools. He was in method a wonderfully gifted Haggadist. His originality lies in the striking form which he understood to give to the old vitalities of his ancestral religion. He moved the heart of the people.

. . . The Jews of every shade of religious belief do not regard Jesus in the light of Paul's theology. But the gospel Jesus, the Jesus who teaches so superbly the principles of Jewish ethics, is revered by all the liberal expounders of Judaism. His words are studied; the New Testament forms a part of Jewish literature. Among the great preceptors that have worded the truths of which Judaism is the historical guardian, none, in our estimation and esteem, takes precedence of the rabbi of Nazareth. To impute to us suspicious sentiments concerning him does us gross injustice. We know him to be among our greatest and purest.

January 26, 1901.

MEMORANDUM JOTTINGS

Here are some of the jottings which I find on my memorandum pad, suggested by the reading of these Jewish letters—letters which it would be difficult to read without feeling that at last Jew and Christian, after a horrible nightmare of misunderstandings centuries long, are coming to see that after all they are first cousins, if not actually brothers.

1. Right nobly is it in some of these Jewish writers to say that Jesus is not to be blamed for those awful persecutions committed for ages in His name, and in reverse of His teachings. As He foretold, many were called by His name whom He knew not, and who knew not Him—false prophets who came in sheep's clothing, but were, within, ravening wolves. Sometimes these wolves tore the Jews, sometimes they tore one another, and sometimes they tore the real Christians. But we live, all of us, in a better time. The glowing sky is not sunset, but is sunrise—sunrise of a glorious day that is to reveal a far wider brotherhood than the world ever heretofore has known.

2. Jewish friends, "Let the dead past bury its dead." All the world is bound to realize sooner or later that your history has

been of inestimable advantage to the world. Turn your faces to that rapidly advancing future. The divine reason will appear for all the sorrows of the past ages, for all the persecutions, misapprehensions, including the errors into which you and we have fallen—largely *because* of these, not in spite of them, the Jewish race will arise a purified flame.

Look the future in the face. As Shelley has put it: "The past is dead, and the future alone is living." Why not, all of us, permit the ashes to grow over the embers of hate, and let the rawness of all wounds, real or imaginary, heal over? Distance now gives a wider survey and a juster survey to both Jew and Christian.

Waste no time in denying hostility to Jesus nineteen hundred years ago. Who alive to-day is to be blamed for that any more than for the forty years of rebellion in the wilderness? No more are you to be blamed for the death of Jesus than are we to-day to be blamed for Washington having held slaves, and for the slave auction-block in the Nation's capital, and for the slave lash a generation ago.

3. The Mosaic system of ceremonies, as seen before the destruction of Jerusalem, was beautiful. How mournfully are Jewish eyes still fixed upon the broken shell. Friends, lift your eyes and see what came out of that shell; see in the boughs above, the singing-bird of the civilization of to-day. Claim it all, for God has given it to the world through your people.

From the matrix of the Jewish soul sprang Christianity. Heine, the great Jewish writer of the last century, has wittily put it: Half the civilized world worships a Jew, the other half a Jewess.

4. Come, children of the prophets, your home, for a season at least, is in the West, not in the East. Let not your hearts longer be troubled. Cease dragging about with you that monstrous corpse of memory—the persecutions committed against you, no matter how frightfully you have been misunderstood and wronged.

Above all let it never be truly said that the Jew has suffered so much, and come so far, now only to reap despair and bitterness. There are two Jewish tendencies to-day, one to cold materialism, the motto of which is "make money, eat, drink, be merry, to-morrow ye die"; the other is upward, the path the prophets walked. This latter tendency must be made to dominate. The time will come, with many already here, when the Jew will turn again to his sublime mission and say, like Agassiz, "I have not time to make money."

Surely, the Jew of America is to be a regenerating educational force to the Jews of all the world, and not to the Jews only. It does not yet appear fully what he shall be; but in some way it will appear that this mass of concentrated human energy will arise above the commercial, the material, the sordid, which so dominates much of the so-called Christian world. The Jewish genius is essentially religious. The Jew will again come to himself and find his center, and God will vindicate His purpose through this wonderful people from Abraham's time to the present.

The Jew has grown strong by the law of the survival of the fittest. For eighteen centuries he has not known what security is, always living by his resource of keenest wit—the feeblest dying out. Those who were physically strong enough and mentally clever enough, escaped destruction, and these became the parents of the new and stronger generation. Thus the law of compensation works justice. For ages the Jew was compelled to be a money-lender as the business of such an one was held to be disreputable for Christians. Thus the Jew mastered the problems of finance, and now when finance rules the world, the Jew is naturally on the throne. The whirligig of time is twirled by a hand that cares for justice.

5. How unseemly, impossible, that it should prove in the end that they who have been to the world messengers of God, whose feet have been beautiful upon the mountain-tops and who did eat the bread of angels, should now forget their prophets and their God and grovel in materialism, and seek to satisfy their hunger with husks. No; this can not be. This people have done too glorious things for humanity, for such an ending. They have in them the nobility that will assert itself. They are born for great things yet to be; they have been made in large molds. They, like the best of us, have often slipped, but are now coming to themselves. For one I am glad, and thank God for it.

Now will the Christian Church permit a friendly exhortation: You have tried everything to get the Jewish people to understand Jesus of Nazareth, except one thing, *love*. Try that, for they believe in love; and you believe in love. Let both Jew and Christian get on this common ground, and have respect for the honest convictions of one another, and then both may clasp hands and look into each other's eyes, and repeat the words uttered alike by Moses and by Jesus:

"THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE GOD. AND THOU SHALT LOVE

HIM WITH ALL THY HEART, AND WITH ALL THY SOUL, AND WITH ALL THY MIGHT."

The lightnings from Mount Sinai and the rays of light and heat from Mount Calvary are one, and will yet fuse into brotherhood all peoples of the earth.

I. K. F.

OTHER TESTIMONY TO JESUS

WILLIAM McKINLEY.

[A Letter. Washington, D.C., 1900.]

The religion which Christ founded has been a mighty influence in the civilization of the human race. If we of to-day owed to it nothing more than this, our debt of appreciation would be incalculable. The doctrine of love, purity, and right-living has step by step won its way into the heart of mankind, has exalted home and family, and has filled the future with hope and promise.

JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU.

[COMPLETE WORKS. (Emilius.) Edinburgh: 1773, vol. ii., pp. 215-218.]

I will confess to you that the majesty of the Scriptures strikes me with admiration, as the purity of the Gospel has its influence on my heart. Peruse the works of our philosophers, with all their pomp of diction; how mean, how contemptible are they, compared with the Scriptures! Is it possible that the sacred personage whose history they contain should be Himself a mere man? . . . Where is the man, where the philosopher, who could so live and die, without weakness, and without ostentation? When Plato describes his imaginary righteous man, loaded with all the punishments of guilt, yet meriting the highest rewards of virtue, he describes exactly the character of Jesus Christ. The resemblance is so striking that all the Church fathers perceived it.

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

[WORKS. Philadelphia: 1871, vol. iv., p. 479.]

I am a Christian in the only sense in which He [Christ] wishes any one to be: sincerely attracted to His doctrines, in preference to all others; ascribing to Him every human excellence, and believing He never claimed any other.

WILLIAM E. GLADSTONE.

[REVIEW OF ECCE HOMO, from GLEANINGS OF PAST YEARS. New York: 1879, vol. iii., pp. 84, 98.]

Through the fair gloss of His manhood, we perceive the rich bloom of His divinity. If He is not now without an assailant, at least He is without a rival. If He be not the Sun of Righteousness, the Friend that gives His life for His friends and that sticketh closer than a brother, the unfailing Consoler, the constant Guide, the everlasting Priest and King, at least, as all must confess, there is no other to come into His room.

JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE.

[CONVERSATIONS WITH ECKERMANN. London: 1874, pp. 567–569.]

If I am asked whether it is in my nature to pay Him devout reverence, I say, certainly. I bow before Him as the divine manifestation of the highest principles of morality. . . . Let mental culture go on advancing, let the natural sciences go on gaining in depth and breadth, and the human mind expand as it may, it will never go beyond the elevation and moral culture of Christianity, as it glistens and shines forth in the Gospel. . . .

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

[PROSE WORKS. Boston: 1870, vol. i., pp. 69, 70.]

Jesus Christ belonged to the true race of prophets. He saw with open eye the mystery of the soul. Drawn by its severe harmony, ravished with its beauty, He lived in it, and had His being there. Alone in all history, He estimated the greatness of man. One man was true to what is in you and me. He saw that God incarnated Himself in man, and evermore goes forth anew to take possession of His world. . . .

FRANÇOIS P. G. GUIZOT.

[MEDITATIONS ON THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY. New York: 1865, p. 320 *et seq.*]

The supernatural being and power of Jesus may be disputed; but the perfection, the sublimity of His acts and precepts, of His life and His moral law, are incontestable. And in effect, not only are they not contested, but they are admired and celebrated enthusiastically, and complacently too; it would seem as if it were desired to restore to Jesus as man, and man alone, the superiority of which men deprived Him in refusing to see in Him the Godhead.

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE.*

[JOHN S. C. ABBOTT'S LIFE OF NAPOLEON, vol. ii., p. 612.]

Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne, and myself founded empires. But on what did we rest the creations of our genius? Upon force. Jesus Christ alone founded His empire upon love, and at this hour, millions of men would die for Him. . . .

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

[LETTER TO PRESIDENT STILES OF YALE COLLEGE, March 9, 1790.]

I think His [Jesus Christ's] system of morals and religion as He left them to us, the best the world ever saw, or is likely to see.

JEAN PAUL RICHTER.

[DAWNINGS FOR GERMANY. Complete Works, pp. 33, 36.]

It concerns Him who, being the holiest among the mighty, the mightiest among the holy, lifted, with His pierced hands, empires off their hinges, turned the stream of centuries out of its channel, and still governs the ages.

JOHN STUART MILL.

[THREE ESSAYS ON RELIGION. New York: 1874. pp. 253, 255.]

Religion can not be said to have made a bad choice in pitching on this man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity; nor even now would it be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete than to endeavor so to live that Christ would approve our life.

THOMAS CARLYLE.

[SARTOR RESARTUS, pp. 155, 158.]

If thou ask to what length man has carried it in this manner, look on our divinest symbol, Jesus of Nazareth, and His life and His biography, and what followed therefrom. Higher has the human thought not yet reached: this Christianity and Christendom—a symbol of quite perennial infinite character, whose significance will ever demand to be anew inquired into, and anew made manifest. . . .

*This testimony from Napoleon has been much disputed. Dr. Philip Schaff, weighing the argument for and against, says that he believes that it is authentic in substance.

WILLIAM E. LECKY.

[HISTORY OF EUROPEAN MORALS. London: 1869, vol. ii., p. 8.]

It may be truly said that the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers and all the exhortations of moralists. This has, indeed, been the wellspring of whatever is best and purest in the Christian life. Amid all the sins and failings, amid all the priestcraft and persecution and fanaticism, that have defaced the Church, it has preserved, in the character and example of its Founder, an enduring principle of regeneration.

JOSEPH ERNEST RENAN.

[THE LIFE OF JESUS. New York: 1864, pp. 215, 365, 375, 376.]

He founded the pure worship—of no age, of no clime—which shall be that of all lofty souls to the end of time. Not only was His religion that day (John iv. 24) the benign religion of humanity, but it was the absolute religion; and if other planets have inhabitants endowed with reason and morality, their religion can not be different from that which Jesus proclaimed at Jacob's well. . . .

Whatever may be the surprises of the future, Jesus will never be surpassed. His worship will grow young without ceasing; His legend will call forth tears without end; His sufferings will melt the noblest hearts; all ages will proclaim that among the sons of men there is none born greater than Jesus.

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST—A SUCCINCT HISTORY

BY DANIEL SEELYE GREGORY, D.D., LL.D.

THE legend of "The Wandering Jew," in its various forms, has its basis in the doctrine of the Second Coming of Christ, or of His personal return to this world. This is true of the form of the legend that underlies Croly's romance, the Lord Himself having given assurance of His return to the hero of the work and the arch-plotter, in the words of doom: "Tarry thou till I come!" The doctrine of the Second Coming has been accepted by the Christian Church and embodied in its creeds in all ages.

The Second Advent finds its analog in many respects in the First Advent, and that, not in its facts only, but in its difficulties as well. According to the Old Testament, a great Redeemer was to appear; he was to be a prophet, priest, and king, and was to deliver his people from their sins and from their oppressors; he was to set up a kingdom that should become universal, absorbing all earthly kingdoms; and he was to exalt his people to the summit of prosperity and glory. These predictions turned the minds of the whole Jewish race toward the future, in confident expectation of the coming Messiah, in whose birth and career they all anticipated their fulfilment. Nevertheless, tho Christ came indeed fulfilling prophecy, it was "in a way which no man did anticipate or could have anticipated."

So the main features of the Second Advent have been prophetically presented with like fulness, and yet, as of old, the Church has had to remain "satisfied with the great truths which those prophecies unfold, and leave the details to be explained by the event."

The many theories of the Second Coming of Christ and of the millennium—or the thousand years' reign of Christ at the end of time, as connecting with that coming—may be reduced to two, one based upon the literal and the other upon the spiritual interpretation of the Scriptures on this subject.

1st. The *literal*, or *Chiliastic*, notion of the millennium, as held by some Christians, was derived from the Jews, and was largely confined originally to the converts from Judaism to Christianity. The Jewish doctrine received its peculiar form from Rabbi Elias, who lived about two centuries before the Christian era. According to this ante-Jewish tradition:

"The world is to last seven thousand years—six thousand to be years

of toil and trouble, and the seventh thousand to be a grand SABBATISM. It is to be ushered in by the advent of the Messiah, who is to establish his throne at Jerusalem. The Holy City is to be rebuilt with surpassing magnificence, as described by Tobit (xiii., xiv.); the Jews are to return to Palestine; their pious ancestors are to be raised from the dead and reign in their own land, with their offspring, under the Messiah" (see T. O. Summers, in Johnson's "Universal Cyclopedia," article "Millennium").

Some of the early Christians—like the early Jews, pressed with persecutions and longing for temporal deliverance—adopted this literal view, except that they modified it by recognizing Jesus as the true Messiah, and by acknowledging the equality of Gentile with Jewish believers in the millennial age. The Thessalonian Christians, in particular, early developed a tendency to the literal, Chiliastic interpretation, which was, however, checked and corrected by Paul's letters to them.

But the first teacher who is clearly recorded as having adopted the crude Jewish notion was Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, in Phrygia; altho Cerinthus, a heretic of the first century, is said to have held it. According to Irenæus, Papias pretended to have received a glowing tradition direct from the Apostle John embodying and enlarging all the Jewish literalism.

In part it is to this effect: "The days shall come in which there shall be vines which shall severally have ten thousand branches, and every one of these shall have ten thousand lesser branches, and every one of these branches shall have ten thousand twigs, and every one of these twigs shall have ten thousand clusters of grapes, and in every one of these clusters shall be ten thousand grapes, and every one of these grapes being pressed shall give twenty-five *metretas* of wine; and when a person shall take hold of one of these sacred bunches, another shall cry out, 'I am a better bunch, take me, and by me bless the Lord.'"

Irenæus reports similar fanciful traditions respecting extraordinary temporal blessings during the millennial period. Papias taught that Christ's reign on earth should be corporeal. In the main, Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tertullian, Nepos, and Lactantius agree with Papias, teaching the Christians under their instruction these views, each varying the details according to his own fancy.

The disciples of Papias and their successors naturally pressed into their service Rev. xx. 1-10, interpreting it with the baldest literalness.

The same method has been used by the later followers, who have largely held to a literal, corporeal reign of Christ on earth for a thousand years. There has often been coupled with this view—growing out of Christ's teaching of the IMMINENCY of his Second Coming—a belief in the IMMEDIACY of that Coming.

2d. The usual or *Catholic* theory of the millennium has its basis in the spiritual, rather than literal, interpretation of the Scriptures on this subject. It rejects alike Jewish traditions and Patristic fancies.

According to this view, the number 1,000 is often employed in the

Scriptures as "denoting a definite number for an indefinite." It is so used manifestly in Psalm xc. 4, in 2 Peter iii. 8, and in Rev. xx. 1-7. In the last passage, as has been often remarked, it is "evidently a definite number for an indefinite," indicating a long period. The entire passage is figurative, in keeping with the enigmatical book in which it is found. The angel with the key of the abyss, a chain and a seal to bind and confine the devil, thrones and the souls of martyrs seated upon them, and judgment given to them—these are all "pictorial representations of the circumscription of Satan's power, the revival of the martyr spirit in the Church, and the general prevalence of truth and righteousness in the earth. This agrees with the figurative style of the Apocalypse, and corresponds with the predictions concerning the prosperity of the Church in the last days. In no other place is there any allusion to a millennium."

This interpretation, it is held, is agreeable to the style of prophecy, that is elsewhere employed in the Revelation (compare Isa. xxvi. 19; Ezek. xxxvii. 13, 14; Hos. vi. 2; Rev. xi. 7, 11). This spiritual view also agrees with the paracletal work of Christ, while the Judaico-Christian does not; it is favorable to the efforts of the Church for the conversion of the world, and accords with the general teachings of the Scriptures concerning "the last things."

But while the literal method has been to some extent followed, there has been a common or *Catholic* Church-doctrine which, as will be seen, has alone been embodied in the creeds of Christendom. That *common, creedal,* or *Catholic doctrine* embraces the teachings that—

1st. The Second Advent of Jesus is to be a personal, visible, and glorious advent as the Son of God.

2d. It is to be preceded by the universal diffusion of the Gospel, the conversion of the Jews, and the coming of Antichrist.

3d. It is to be accompanied by the resurrection of the dead, just and unjust, the general judgment, the end of the world, and the consummation of Christ's kingdom.

The cardinal passages of Scripture on this doctrine are *Matthew xxiv.* and *the two Epistles to the Thessalonians*—the latter of which was apparently rendered necessary by the development of the teachings in the former. It is not possible to enter here into a detailed interpretation of these passages. Had there been no extraneous influences at work, what is claimed to be the simple and natural interpretation of these Scriptures, which has always been in accord with the Catholic doctrine embodied in the creeds, would probably have continued to be the faith of all Christians.

The later-Jewish doctrine of the Messianic kingdom upon earth was a main influence in directing the new development. The disciples being Jews were naturally infected with this view, and did not rise above it till after the experiences of Pentecost.

Millenarianism or Chiliasm naturally arose out of sympathy with this Jewish materialism, and spread to some extent among the Jewish

Christians in the early Church. There was also introduced the doctrine of *two resurrections*, based on the literal understanding of Rev. xx., unmodified by the teachings of Jesus in Matt. xxiv. With the Second Advent of Christ, according to this view, is to take place the first resurrection, that of the righteous dead at that time. Then is to follow a personal, corporeal reign of Christ for a thousand years—a millennium—upon the renovated earth. At the close of this millennial period, the second resurrection, that of the righteous and the wicked, is to occur, and the end of the world.

As already hinted, this doctrine at first started and became prevalent among the Jewish, as distinguished from the Gentile, Christians. Persecutions arising from time to time, and the distressed conditions resulting from governmental opposition have, however, extended to the Gentile Christians belief in the corporeal features of Chiliasm. They have likewise resulted at various times in an earnest longing for the *immediate* return of Christ, in an expectation of His *immediate setting up of His kingdom* in the place of the earthly kingdoms, and in belief in the *imminence of His advent.*

The conflict between the earlier and Catholic doctrine and this Chiliastic outgrowth may readily be traced in the history of the Church. It appeared in its full development, first of all, early in the apostolic age, in connection with the Church at Thessalonica. The two earliest of the Pauline Epistles—supposed to have been written in A.D. 52 and 53—are largely taken up with the exhibition and refutation of the departures from the Catholic doctrine on this subject.

After their experience at Philippi, Paul and Silas passed on through Amphipolis and Apollonia to Thessalonica. This city—now called in slightly changed form Salonica—was a great maritime city and the capital of the first division of Macedonia, and it always had a large Jewish population. As Antioch was the natural center for Christian work in Asia Minor, so Thessalonica was one of the best strategic points—if not the best—for beginning the conquest of Europe. This was recognized by Paul himself, who, inspired with the great purpose of making the empire of Christ coterminous with that of Rome, wrote, only a few months after leaving Thessalonica (1 Thess. i. 8), that "from them the word of the Lord had sounded forth like a trumpet, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but *in every place.*"

The preaching that led to the expulsion of Paul and Silas from the city (see Acts xvii. 1-10) furnishes the key to the Epistles written a little later. It was the doctrine of the *Kingdom of God.* The accusation brought against them was that they were proclaiming *another King* than Cæsar (Acts xvii. 7). In writing to them Paul accordingly reminds them of his exhortations and entreaties, that they should "walk worthy of God who called them to his *Kingdom* and Glory" (1 Thess. ii. 12), and addresses them as those who had "suffered affliction for the sake of that *Kingdom*" (2 Thess. i. 5). Christ's *Second Coming* had evidently been a chief topic of Paul's preaching to them.

The brevity of the Apostle's stay in the city gave little opportunity for instructing and grounding the Christians, chiefly Gentiles, in the Christian system; but they appear to have continued stedfast in the faith in the severe persecutions and afflictions that followed (1 Thess. ii. 14; iii. 3; 2 Thess. i. 4). Nevertheless there were some peculiar aspects of the doctrine of the Second Coming toward which their trials seemed naturally to push them. Looking upon it as the glorious *coming of the Lord for deliverance* (1 Thess. i. 10), some came to believe in the *imminency*, if not the *immediacy*, of the Second Advent; and so gave up laboring for their own support, became burdensome to the brethren, and encouraged irregularities by their mode of life. Moreover, there arose a perplexity about the case of those who should fall asleep before the Second Coming.

This state of things led Paul, toward the close of 53 A.D., to write from Athens his *First Epistle* to the Thessalonians, to give specific instruction regarding these points. His main theme is the *consolation from the hope of the Second Coming of the Lord*. The leading words in the Epistle (as in 2 Thessalonians) are *Parousia* (advent, or appearing) and *Affliction*. The prominence in it of the coming of the Lord is shown by the fact that each chapter rises to and rests in that Coming as its conclusion (see ch. i. 10; ii. 20; iii. 13; iv. 17, 18; v. 23).

The *Second Epistle* was written to the Thessalonians in A.D. 53, from Corinth. The former letter had produced salutary results, on which the Apostle congratulates them; but their manifold tribulations on account of the faith had caused the opinion that the Lord's coming would take place immediately, to gain ground rapidly among them. This hope was fostered by some among them who claimed to have the "spirit of prophecy," and it was also thought to be favored by Paul's own teachings (2 Thess. ii. 2). In consequence of this, the habits of idleness and irregularity had increased. Moreover, the false Jewish teachers were beginning to lead the Thessalonian Christians to look upon "the Day of the Lord," according to the Old-Testament view (Isa. xiii.; Joel ii.; Amos v. 18), as *a Day of Judgment*, rather than of deliverance and glory. The aim of the *Second Epistle* is to meet the new needs that had arisen.

It will be seen from this outline view that the Epistles to the Thessalonians bear a relation to the Second Advent of Christ similar to that of the Book of Daniel to his First Advent. They were the guide-book for that age and for the Church of the after-ages. In conjunction with the teaching of our Lord Himself in Matt. xxiv., their instructions and directions would appear to be sufficiently full and explicit. For the time being the Chiliastic views seem to have disappeared from the Church, and the Catholic doctrine to have held full sway.

A new development of Chiliasm took place toward the close of the second century. It resulted from the persecuting hand of the government being laid heavily upon the Church.

It is not necessary here to enter into the causes of the persecutions by

the Romans. It is enough to note that the ideas of religious freedom in the modern world are quite alien to those of the ancient world. There were none but state religions and national gods. Cicero lays down as the fundamental maxim of legislation in ancient Romanism, that "no man shall have for himself particular gods of his own; no man shall worship by himself any new or foreign gods, unless they are recognized by the public laws." And so Christianity came necessarily into collision with the laws of the state.

The bloody persecutions, from the last half of the second century onward, were the inevitable outcome of this natural and essential antagonism; but even in the opening half of the second century the Christians were subjected to sore trials such as those from which the Thessalonians suffered. In passing through these, their minds seem to have turned again, says Neander, to "the idea of the millennial reign, which the Messiah was to set up on earth. . . . In the midst of persecutions, it was a solace and support to the Christians to anticipate that even upon this earth, the scene of their sufferings, the Church was destined to triumph in its perfected and glorified state." In some regions this view took on a more spiritual form; while in others, as in Phrygia, the natural home of a sensual, enthusiastic religious spirit, "Chiliasm appeared in its crass and grossly conceived form in which the earthly Jewish mind had depicted it."

Among the Apostolic Fathers, in the second century, the doctrine appears in the writings of Barnabas, Hermas, and Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, only, the last named teaching it in its grossest form. As Dr. Shedd has said ("History of Christian Doctrine," vol. ii., p. 390): "There are no traces of Chiliasm in the writings of Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, Tatian, Athenagorus, and Theophilus of Antioch." He adds: "The inference from these facts, then, is that this tenet was not the received faith of the Church certainly down to the year 150. It was held only by individuals." Among the really masterful scholars, ecclesiastics, and theologians, it had not a single advocate. That it was not the faith of the Apostolic Church is further evident from the fact that it was not embodied in the so-called Apostles' Creed, which is "undoubtedly the substance of the short confessions of faith which the catechumens of the Apostolic Church were accustomed to make upon entering the Church."

The period from 150 A.D. to 250 has been called "the blooming age of Millenarianism." It was in this period of bitter and increased persecution that Irenæus and Tertullian came forward as its advocates, giving glowing descriptions of the millennial reign. "Antichrist, together with all the nations that side with him, will be destroyed. All earthly empires, and the Roman in particular, will be overthrown. Christ will appear, and will reign a thousand years, in corporeal presence on earth, in Jerusalem, which will be rebuilt and made the capital of His kingdom. The patriarchs, prophets, and all the pious, will be raised from the dead, and share in the felicity of this kingdom. The New Jerusa-

lem is depicted in the most splendid colors" (Shedd, "History of Christian Doctrine, vol. ii., p. 390).

But even Irenæus and Tertullian, in presenting "brief synoptical statements of the authorized faith of the Church," in their writings against heretics, make no mention of the Millenarian tenet as belonging to that faith.

The third century, chiefly in its first half, witnessed the strenuous discussion that seems practically to have brought to an end, for the time at least, the tendency in the Church to accept the Chiliastic doctrine. This was conducted in the Alexandrian School, under the lead of three great teachers, Clement of Alexandria, Origen his pupil, and Dionysius the pupil of Origen. They did not reject the Apocalypse, but addressed themselves to opposing the grossly literal interpretations put upon it by the Chiliasts.

The method adopted by Bishop Dionysius of Alexandria is of peculiar interest, as showing what may be accomplished by candid Christian discussion. Neander gives a somewhat detailed account of his course ("Church History," vol. i., p. 452). Nepos, a pious Egyptian bishop belonging to the region of Arsinoë, and who was a devoted friend of the sensual Chiliasm, wrote a book against the Alexandrian school, entitled "A Refutation of the Allegorists." "The book seems to have found great favor with the clergy and laity in the above-mentioned district. Great mysteries and disclosures of future events were supposed to be found here; and many engaged with more zeal in the study of the book and theory of Nepos than in that of the Bible and its doctrines." So zealous did his disciples become for this tenet that they brought the charge of heresy against all who refused to accept it. Whole churches separated themselves from their communion with the mother-church at Alexandria. After the death of Nepos, a country priest, Coracion, took the leadership of this party.

Neander gives an interesting account of the way in which, by instruction and discussion, the good and wise Bishop of Alexandria, Dionysius, led Coracion back to the faith. This happened in the year 255.

"Having restored the unity of faith among his own churches," Dionysius wrote his work on the Promises, for the instruction of the churches. By the opening of the fourth century Chiliasm seems to have almost disappeared from the Church, as is shown by the statements of Eusebius, the church historian. Describing the writings of Papias, Eusebius remarks that they contain "matters rather too fabulous," among which he enumerates the opinion of Papias that "there would be a certain millennium after the resurrection, and that there would be a corporeal reign of Christ on this very earth." The return to the Catholic doctrine on the subject seems therefore to have been quite general before the year 400.

The history of the Chiliastic doctrine from the opening of the fifth century may be briefly summarized, since its manifestations have been only sporadic and temporary.

As the tenth century drew to a close there arose "an undefined fear and expectation among the masses that the year 1000 would witness the advent of the Lord," but this passed away with the century.

At the time of the Reformation, the doctrine was revived by the fanatical Anabaptists, Münzer and his followers, who attempted to put down all temporal sovereignty and to establish the kingdom of the saints with fire and sword. They were, however, vigorously opposed by Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, and the other great reformers, and their military forces were defeated and crushed and their leaders slain at Mühlhausen in 1525 and at Münster in 1535. Leading symbols of the Reformation period strongly condemn Chiliasm, *e.g.*, the Augsburg Confession, the Belgic Confession, and the English Confession of Edward VI.

The history of the doctrine during the nineteenth century is well summarized by Dr. Shedd:

"During the present century, individual minds in England and America, and upon the Continent of Europe, have attempted to revive the theory—in some instances in union with an intelligent and earnest orthodoxy, in others in connection with an uneducated and somewhat fanatical pietism. The first class is represented by Delitzsch and Auberlen in Germany, and by Cumming, Elliott, and Bonar in Great Britain; the second class by the so-called Adventists and Millerites in the United States."

The Millerite movement, started in 1831 by William Miller, an America., who predicted that Christ's Second Coming and the end of the world would take place in 1843, received what was practically its deathblow in the failure of the prediction to meet with accomplishment at the appointed time. Substantially the same classes of people are, however, to be found among the Adventists, or Second Adventists, of the present time, including a considerable number of immigrant foreigners, especially Scandinavians. Some of these hold to the doctrine of the annihilation of the wicked and to that of the sleep of the dead until the resurrection. The approach of the twentieth century seems to have given an impulse to the Adventist movement, altho it has not changed the character or quality of its advocates.

The survey thus made of the history of the Church, ancient, medieval, and modern, brings out the fact that the *Catholic* doctrine, as already outlined, has always been the Church doctrine. The *Chiliastic* views based upon the literal interpretation of the Scriptures bearing upon the subject have never been generally accepted. The facts, as summarized by Dr. Shedd ("History of Christian Doctrine," vol. ii., p. 398), are as follows:

"1. That Millenarianism was never the ecumenical faith of the Church and never entered as an article into any of the creeds.

"2. That Millenarianism has been the opinion of individuals and parties only—some of whom have stood in agreement with the Catholic faith, and some in opposition to it."

REASONS FOR THE BELIEF THAT CHRIST MAY COME WITHIN THE NEXT TWENTY YEARS

By ARTHUR T. PIERSON, D.D.

Is the day of Christ near at hand?

This question is attracting much attention as this new century begins, and wise men are watching for the morning star, which is the herald of the new dawn.

Imminence is a word used for the union of the *certainty of an event with the uncertainty of its time.* One text suffices to show that such imminence is, in the Scripture, characteristic of the Lord's return: "Be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh" (Matt. xxiv. 44). Such an exhortation excludes mere argument. The certainty of the event is assured, for "the Son of Man cometh;" the uncertainty of the time is conceded, for it is "in an hour that ye think not" or as verse 36 adds, "of that day and hour knoweth no man."

In a broader sense, the word imminent is used to express the idea that the event is *impending*—nigh at hand. True, it may be unwise to attempt to fix the very "day and hour," since these are declared to lie among the divine secrets. Yet it may be both possible and proper to observe carefully the signs which are to precede or accompany Christ's reappearing, and even the mistakes of those who have made erroneous calculations as to the time may serve only to narrow the circle within which the truth is to be found. We shall therefore inquire briefly whether there is any reason to look for the speedy reappearing of the Son of Man, and, without committing ourselves to all the opinions which follow, we may state the grounds on which such conclusions have been reached by many devout students of the subject.

The appeal must, of course, be to the Holy Oracles, if we are to get any safe response. Seven signs hinted at in the Word of God may be selected, as prominent:

(1) A widespread witness to Christ, with (2) a widespread decline in godliness. (3) A marked movement among the Jews, with (4) the fulness of the Gentiles. (5) A singularly unresting state of society, with (6) a daring development of iniquity and (7) a confident sense of false security. These seven indications must be studied in the light of

seven conspicuous passages of Scripture, such as Matt. xxiv., Luke xxi., Rom. xi., 2 Thess. ii., 2 Peter iii., 2 Tim. iii., and Jude.

It may be well to add that, if such conclusion hung upon any one of these signs alone, it might be more than doubtful; but, when all these unite, they serve as far safer guides; as a cable may be unbreakable, any one of whose separate strands would easily part under severe tension.

Thoughtful observers of events, who are at the same time prayerful students of Scripture, have come to feel that there is a manifold and remarkable preparation for the "Parousia" or personal coming of Christ; and that the existing state of both the church and the world seems to demand His coming as the only solution of the problems of prophecy and of history.

The present drift of society is toward *anarchy*, a drift that has been peculiarly rapid during the last quarter-century. Socialism, communism, nihilism, and the hot battle between capital and labor, monopoly and poverty, are the dominant facts and forces in this war, now being waged, with increasing violence and desperateness, against all government. There is also a strong drift in the church toward *apostasy*. Witness the advance of Romanism, ritualism, and rationalism, even in Protestant churches and communities. In society at large there is a corresponding advance of materialism, agnosticism, and infidelity; and the polite disguises of science, culture, and criticism do not hide the true features and forms which they clothe, but can not conceal.

Who can fail to see the trend of the Jews toward national rehabilitation and the colonization of Palestine, while at the same time the church is fettered by secularism on the one hand and skepticism on the other? Side by side with these signs there is the opening of the world to the Gospel, the world-wide circulation of the Bible in over four hundred tongues, the network of missionary societies wrapping the globe, and the uprising of Christian young men and women in an unparalleled crusade of missions. All these are like fingers all pointing in one direction —the Sunrise of the Ages.

Many other Scriptures, besides those already cited, startle us from our apathy, especially when we compare them. Take, for example, Matt. xiii. and Rev. ii.–iii. The seven parables in the former and the seven letters to the churches in the latter appear to correspond chronologically. In Matthew, the last scene shows the *dragnet*—the obvious metaphor for world-wide evangelization. In the Apocalypse, the last rebuke is to *Laodicea*—the self-deceived and self-sufficient church, that shuts in worldliness and shuts out Christ. When in history did those two conditions ever meet as they do now? On one hand a wealthy, self-satisfied, lukewarm Christianity, and on the other a casting of the Gospel net into the world sea, and gathering of every kind of fish! For the first time in this gospel age, ecclesiastical degeneracy and evangelistic activity curiously blending—fulfilling before our eyes our Lord's paradox—world-wide witness side by side with love waxing cold!

One remark may be added as to the "times of the Gentiles."

There is a remarkable consensus of opinion that it is from Nebuchadnezzar—the world king and head of gold—that the "times of the gentiles" date. His time was about 600 B.C. If the "seven times" or seven years, of Dan. iv. 25, represent, as is supposed, seven periods of 360 years each (or seven times twelve months of thirty year-days), then the full seven times from Nebuchadnezzar to the end would be 2,520 years, and reckoning from 600 B.C. this brings us to 1920 A.D., or thereabouts. These 2,520 years appear to be divided into two exactly equal periods of 1,260 years each, or "forty and two months," or "a time, times and half a time" (*i.e.*, three and a half of these prophetic years) (Rev. xi. 2, 3., and xii. 14).

As to the filling up of the 1,260 days of the latter half, the historic correspondences are so remarkable that at least ten different methods of computation seem to point to the same precise period—an interval of time lying somewhere between 1880 and 1920, the uncertainty of the exact time of the end resulting from the difficulty of fixing the exact date of the beginning. But it is this convergence of prophetic and historic times at some point within these forty years which has awakened such a widespread interest in the imminence of our Lord's coming. And, surely, as our Lord has taught us, if it behooves us to observe the signs of the weather, we should not be indifferent to the signs on God's greater horizon, which to watchful souls indicate the approach of the day of the Lord (Matt. xvi. 1-3).

Upon the ten different methods of computation referred to above, it may be well to expand a little, without committing oneself to the positions taken. No one, however, can appreciate the argument, whatever be its worth, who does not understand the *numerical system* which manifestly pervades the whole Word of God, and which constitutes a sort of mathematical framework upon which the whole written Revelation is constructed; and not only so, but this same numerical structure pervades also all the works of God in Creation, and all the workings of God in human history. Astronomy, chemistry, botany, biology, theology, all obey one mathematical law, and it must be a prejudiced mind that refuses to recognize this fact. The orbits of the planets and the spiral course of the leaf-buds on the trees, the proportions and dimensions of crystals, the octaves of sound and of color—these and many other operations, forces and forms of nature conform to strict mathematical laws. From Sirius down to the invisible atom there is a uniform system, and it tells of the one Designer and Creator. Once let this fact be admitted and it becomes no novelty to us to find evidences of similar mathematical precision in the periods of history. Let us, therefore, in conclusion, glance at the various positions taken by devout students of history and prophecy, and impartially survey the outlook from their points of view.

1. The first method of computation, already referred to, as fixing the present period as approximately "the time of the end" is known as "the times of the Gentiles," seven times, or years, each consisting of 360 year-days, or a sum-total of 2,520 years. Of this period, Professor Totten, of

New Haven, following the lead of the British Chronological Association, says:

"Nabopolassar shook off the yoke of Assyria, and, by thus assuming the crown of Babylon, commenced the 'times of the Gentiles.' His accession took place in the seventh civil (first sacred) month of the year 3377 A.M. The 'times of the Gentiles' therefore ran out 2,520 years thereafter, or in March, 5897 A.M. (A.D. 1899)."

Thus by another method of computing the times of the Gentiles, he arrives at the present period as at least the beginning of the end.

"Joshua's Long Day was the last day in broad prophetic chronology which is to be wholly counted as *solar* time. Since that day, the millenaries have been 'shortened' to *lunar* years. The sum of the 2,555½ + 'long' or solar years up to that day, and the 3,444¾ + 'shortened' or lunar years, from thence to the vernal equinox of 1899 A.D., is exactly 6,000, and accurately terminates the sixth millennary since creation."

2. Secondly, the *Sabbatic system*, impressed on the whole face of Scripture history, affords, as many think, a very obvious key to the divine chronology. This Sabbatic system reaches back to Eden and characterizes the whole annals of the world. There was first consecrated the seventh *day*, then the seventh *week*, then the seventh *month*, then the seventh *year*, then the seventh *seven* of years—introducing the "jubilee"—then the seventh *seventy* of years, the Grand Jubilee. This number 7×70, or 490, appears in at least two conspicuous places, 1 Kings vi. 1, where, adding the ten years of the temple building to the 480, between the exodus and the beginning of the work, we have 490; and, in Daniel ix. 24, where again the seven sevens reappear, as the sacred typical number, between the exodus from the captivity and the building of the new spiritual temple of God under the Messiah. This number 490 is doubly a type of completeness: it is not only the product of 7 multiplied by 70, but of 7 times 7 (49), the interval from jubilee to jubilee, multiplied by 10—another sacred number. These jubilee periods must be obviously reckoned from the time of *Moses*, when the law of the jubilee first appears. And, counting the exodus from 2515 A.M., the full seven periods of 490, or 3,430 years, would bring us to 5945 A.M., or somewhere this side of the middle of the next century as its extreme limit; and, if the years are to be reckoned by the *prophetic-year* standard of 360 days (twelve equal months of thirty days each) the limit would be somewhere about 1898, so that by this method again the "beginning of the end" has already come.

3. A third method of computation, "*The Millennial Standard*," is thought to point to the same approximate terminus. "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day" (2 Peter iii. 8). This is regarded by many as another not very obscure hint as to God's chronology, and they therefore reason that the predicted millennium or thousand years of Sabbatic rest, crowning the six millenniums of a world's toil, can not be far off.

4. The fourth method of computation is "*the historical.*" The num-

ber 1,260 ("forty-two months," "a time, times, and half a time") is as we have already seen, conspicuous both in Daniel and in Revelation.

Those who accept the "historical" method of interpreting the Apocalypse believe that the beast and the false prophet represent the Papacy and Mohammedanism, or the crucifix and the crescent. They maintain that it is a curious fact, to say the least, that both these systems date from the period between 606 and 620 (the decree of Phocas and the first Hegira) as the *terminus a quo*, and, adding 1,260, they reach again a *terminus ad quem* somewhere between 1866 and 1886 as "the beginning of the end" of these systems, as world powers or kingdoms.

5. A fifth mode of computation is that of the "*Antichrist Period.*" The number, 666, is divinely given as the number of the *lawless one* (ὁ ἀνομος, ὁ ἀναρχος) who is to be revealed in the last week of years. This number, thus inseparably linked with the man of sin, in whom personally all the Antichristian systems of history are to "head up," is thought by many to stand for the period of the race's rebellion, and to be the symbolic number of perpetual unrest and incompleteness. There is a show of reason in this, for 666 is a repeating decimal that ever approaches, but never reaches, *seven*, the number of completeness and rest. Six times this number 666 gives 3,996, the grand crisis—the year of Christ's birth, reckoning from creation; and again, reckoning from Abraham's birth, as father of the faithful, brings us to the beginning of this century as a new crisis in history.

6. A sixth road by which the same terminus is reached is the "condition of *world-witness*" (see Matt. xxiv. 14, Mark xiii. 10). Christ distinctly stated that the Gospel must first be published among all nations, and preached as a witness to all nations, and then would come the END. With no little force many argue that there never was a period of such world-wide evangelism as now. Over three hundred missionary societies at work, about twelve thousand missionary workers, and nearly fifty thousand native helpers, engaged; the Bible translated into over four hundred tongues, etc., and "published to all nations." It is also very noticeable that the motto of the present "crusade" is "The evangelization of the world in this generation!"

7. A seventh mode of computing is that of the *Laodicean lukewarmness.* By a comparison of Matt. xiii. 47–50 and Rev. iii. 14–22, it will be seen that the last state of the "*kingdom*," previous to the end, is world-wide evangelism, as indicated by the dragnet; and the last state of the *church* is deep-seated apathy, as indicated by the Laodicean lukewarmness. And those who hold this view contend that both conditions are to coexist as the end draws nigh. They point us to the startling fact that *never before* has the church shown signs of such extensive evangelization on the one hand, and such extensive deterioration on the other. Many regard this latter as the "falling away," which is to precede the end (2 Thess. ii. 3).

8. An eighth road seems to end at the same goal—it is the *development of anarchism.* The hints in the Epistles to the Thessalonians,

2 Peter, Jude, and the Apocalypse, it is contended, all agree in showing us that, as the end approaches, there will be a peculiarly lawless spirit prevailing—an uprising of an organized resistance to all authority in church and state, a combination of forces to supplant all government, and at the same time an arbitrary attempt to compel men to limit even trade and commerce by a certain "mark," that alone authorizes one to "buy or sell" (Rev. xiii. 16, 17). Those who emphasize this as a sign of the end point triumphantly to the recent and unprecedented growth of communism, socialism, and nihilism; and to the simultaneous growth of trades-unions and protective organizations, monopolies and trusts, which restrict all trade or labor to their "mark."

9. The ninth argument presented for the near approach of the end is *Irredentism* or the drift of the Jews toward Palestine, and the rehabilitation of their national life. This is, as the advocates of this view contend, the blossoming of the fig-tree" (Matt. xxiv. 32, 33), which marks the end as "near, even at the doors." Certainly there is something very startling in the modern movement known as "Zionism," and which has developed within the last five years, summoning these great conferences of leading Jews to the European capitals. Never before has the national spirit of the Israelites had such a revival since Christ ascended.

10. The tenth line of argument converges at the same point, namely, the *Spirit's withdrawal*. There is a mysterious passage in 2 Thess. ii. 7, where we are told that there is some great Hinderer, whose presence prevents the final outbreak of the Mystery of Iniquity, and who must be withdrawn before the end of lawlessness can come, in the "reappearing of the Lord." The advocates of this view contend that, by every sign, the Spirit of God is shown to have withdrawn or to be withdrawing from the church as a whole. It is maintained by very devout souls that there is left, in the church at large, neither spiritual worship, spiritual faith, spiritual work, nor spiritual life; that altho these all exist, they exist in a few elect individuals, and not in the church as a body; and that, especially in the matter of *administration*—the specific office of the Spirit—He is displaced by the spirit of the world, as evinced by the worldly men and maxims, secular oratory, artistic music, worldly entertainments, etc., which everywhere prevail.

Whatever grounds, above presented, may seem untenable or unsafe, one thing seems undeniable: there is a *convergence of signs upon this our day*, such as has never indicated any previous period as the probable time of the end. For example, if the Hebrew means *Rosh*, Russia, and this nation is thus in prophecy indicated as the "head" of the last great movement of history toward world empire, how like a fulfilment are all the present movements of that empire—the trans-Siberian railway, the encroachments on China, etc.! And if universal anarchy is to be the last great development of society, when was there a time when, both in church and state, there was such a development of lawlessness (ἀνομία)?

Upon this subject we can no longer, within these narrow limits, ex-

patiate. But it may at least stir up the thoughtful reader to individual search into the signs of the times. What are the indications above the prophetic and historic horizon? If the signs of the coming of the Son of Man are indeed to be seen, it may well incite us to be among the watchers who, while others yet sleep, are awake and looking for the dawn!